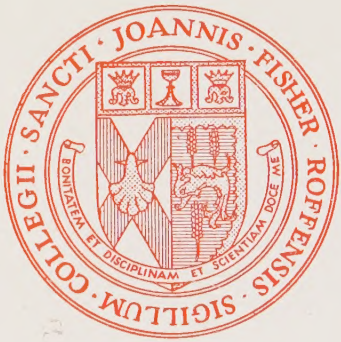

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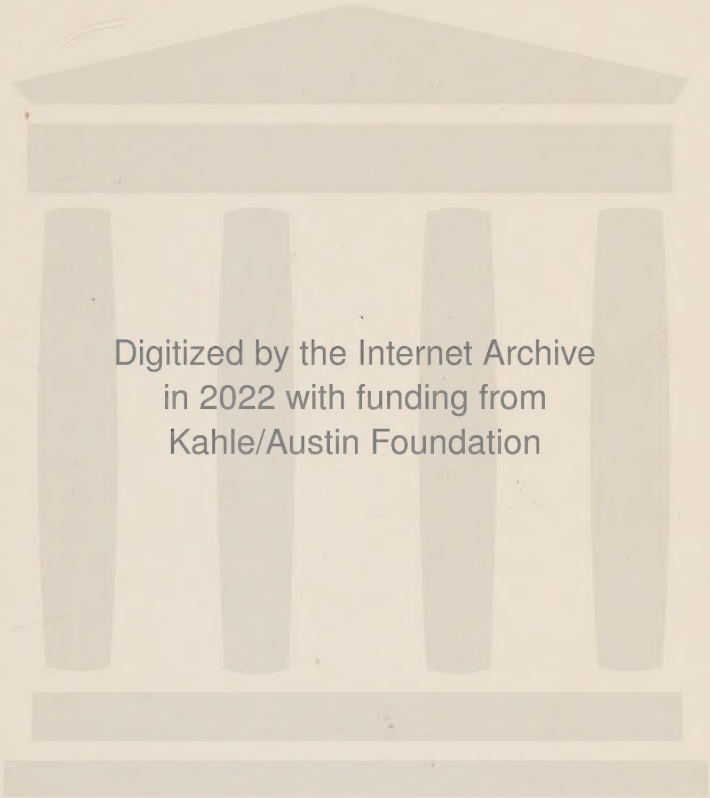
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MY FAVOURITE PASSAGE FROM DANTE

MY FAVOURITE PASSAGE FROM DANTE

Chosen and explained by the most distinguished Dante lovers of the world today

A COMPILATION WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN T. SLATTERY, PH.D.
AUTHOR OF
DANTE, THE CENTRAL MAN OF ALL THE WORLD.
DANTE'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CHURCH
AND THE CLERGY OF HIS TIME.

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MY FAVOURITE PASSAGE FROM DANTE

DANTE AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

"To read Dante is a duty, to re-read him a need, to understand him a pledge and principle of greatness."—TOMASSEO.

The present day activity in the re-writing of history, brought about both by the critical spirit of our age and the discovery of manuscripts of the past, only confirms the truth of the characterization of the thirteenth century, made by Doctor James J. Walsh, that it is—"The Greatest of Centuries." * The thought is also expressed by Count Montalembert who calls it—"Perhaps the most important, perfect and brilliant period in the history of Catholic society." † We find that historical research likewise strongly reinforces the estimate made of a brilliant son of that medieval age by so discriminating a critic as Ruskin that "He is the central man of all the world, as representing in perfect balance the imaginative, moral and intellectual qualities all at their highest." The man so signalized gained his supremacy among the immortals, not because he had led armies or built cities or framed laws or possessed the qualities of a captain of industry but because, as an incomparable lover of beauty, a matchless artist of "the sweet new style," a master analyst of motive and emotion, a man truly acquainted with sin and sorrow, he had written a POEM!

As all the world knows, Dante's title to fame springs from his mystic Divine Comedy wherein he sings a song truly sublime, in accents so beautiful that its reading, after six hundred years, is heard with rapture by even the illiterate Italian peasant capable, perhaps, of feeling only its music without understanding all its subtle theme. The world over, there are innumerable students who, though they know Dante only in translation, yet find in his poem a solace in grief, a strength in trial, a light for the mind, a fire for the heart, a joy to thrill the soul.

* *The Thirteenth the Greatest of Centuries.* (Sixtieth Thousand)
† *Life of St. Elizabeth*—Introduction.

Dante was himself convinced that his sacred poem "to which heaven and earth had set their hand," would make him worthy to be associated with the five immortals of antiquity. The tardy recognition of his genius came all too late for him whose life, though it spanned but fifty-six years, must have seemed long, so filled was it with sorrow and disappointment, with humiliation and disillusion. He died practically unhonored and unsung, save at Ravenna. The tragedy of misfortune followed him to the tomb. He had gone to Venice to represent the Court of Ravenna at that period of his career when, to quote the words he puts into the mouth of Guido, "I found me come where each behoves to lower sail and gather in the lines." (Inf. XXVII, 79) He received less respect than that accorded to even the least of the other ambassadors. Sad to say, further humiliation was put upon him by the refusal of the Venetian government to set aside a ship to carry him home. Weary and discouraged the poet was obliged to make the journey along the coast, over the poisonous malarial marshes. Burning with fever, he finally reached Ravenna.

Fortune had never been his friend and he was now forced to realize, with poignant regret, that he would never live to see fulfilled his early dreams of greatness. The world had dealt him many a cruel blow. Years before, untimely death had taken Beatrice, the ideal lady of his heart. So stunned was he by the blow that his friends despaired of his life. Florence, "the of all least-loving mother" had closed her gates against him. She had even unjustly indicted him for malfeasance in office. More than once she had threatened him even with the stake if he returned, but that unjust treatment had only fired his patriotism into a passion not lessened by time or distance. Though far away from his native city he continued to dream of a universal empire as a panacea for the evils of the social and the political order. Through Henry VII of Luxemburg Dante hoped to realize his ideal of an Emperor, but Henry died prematurely. Dante, almost heartbroken, still held fast to his dream. An exile and a victim of cowardly injustice so intense and continuous that one might think it would have given him a gloomy or a cynical view of life, he yet came forth from his trials with his soul free

from pessimism, his character spiritualized, his eyes brightened by an outlook upon the mastery of good and the defeat of evil.

Soon a posterity, scarcely born when death had overtaken him, began to acclaim him. Barely fifteen years had passed from the time of his death when Florence herself, tardily repentant, saw, with unfeigned delight, Orcagna, not only depicting him as a saint in Heaven but even frescoing the walls of the Church of Santa Maria Novella with scenes from the Inferno and the Paradiso. Giotto had already painted for the Palazzo di Podestà a picture of the poet, as he appeared when he was between twenty and twenty-five years of age. Just a little over a half century after the death of the exile of Ravenna, Florence, in reparation of her injustice to Dante, established a chair of Dantean literature and Boccaccio, its incumbent, delivered, in a church, lectures on the life and works of the poet. By way of suffering indeed did Dante enter upon his glory. It was not the first time nor the last in human history that the work of a genius was cradled into immortal song by misfortune. Providence had found Dante plastic to its designs and had finally led him from grief to greatness, though the victory, like that of the Cross, was posthumous. Today Dante is honored as the supreme poet of Christianity and of humanity.

Even without the Divine Comedy Dante's genius would have been crowned by his posterity. His *Vita Nuova,* (New Life) written in Italian, and containing the history of his love for Beatrice, is a work so meritorious that of it Charles Eliot Norton says: "So long as there are lovers in this world and so long as lovers are poets, this first and tenderest love story of modern literature will be read with appreciation and responsive sympathy." His *Convivio,* (Banquet) written also in Italian, was never finished. It is a philosophical commentary on three of his canzoni telling, in allegorical fashion, how Dante became the lover of the mystical lady Philosophy. The book also contains a number of lyrical poems which have been collected under the title of *Canzoniere* or *Rime.* Of his Latin works, *De Vulgari Eloquentia,* (The Vernacular Tongue), is a treatise in two books on Italian as a literary language, "Even in its unfinished state," writes

Dr. Edmund G. Gardner, "it is a most illuminating book to all who wish to understand the metrical form of the Italian *canzone.*" *De Monarchia* is a treatise on the nature and necessity of a single supreme temporal monarchy, coexistent with the spiritual sovereignty of the Pope. In this famous book, "we first find in its full maturity the general conception of the nature of man, of government, and of human destiny which was afterward transfigured, without being transformed, into the framework of the Sacred Poem." (Philip H. Wicksteed)

The other minor works of Dante are *Epistolae* (Epistles, mainly political) *Egloghe* (Eclogues) and *Questio ad Aqua et Terra,* a scientific inquiry as to the relative position of earth and water on the surface of the globe.

But Dante's supreme renown will ever be associated with "his mystical unfathomable song." The Divine Comedy is not a record of a voyage of physical discovery and exploration, but it is the penitential itinerary which every sinner must make to regain peace with God. The poem is an allegorical journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven and fits the spiritual experiences of every man, no matter what his rank, what language he speaks, when or where he lives. The dark wood in which the poet finds himself astray in the middle of the journey of life is man's condition of moral blindness. Hell, with its frightful torments, is the sinful world which vanquishes him. Purgatory symbolizes man's purification and betterment. The Garden of Eden represents man fully forgiven. The ascent through the different heavens into the presence of God Himself portrays the soul's growth in holiness, its fitness to see God.

All along the journey through the three kingdoms of the Hereafter the poet, by the reflections he makes and the judgments he expresses, is showing us his very self. His work stands forth as a human document. Self-revealed, Dante appears a most intense, sincere personality. In the pursuit of his high ideals he cannot be bribed, baffled, frightened or defeated. Adversity only quickens his vigor, persecution only strengthens his will. He stands "like a firm tower which never rocks its summit with the blowing of the winds." (Purg. V, 14.) The slogan of the modern exponent of the strenuous life (Theo-

dore Roosevelt) ; "Hit the line, don't fool, don't shirk, but hit the line," might well have been the motto of our poet. To sustain the attention of the reader the poem is also replete with stories of human interest and scenes of deathless beauty expressed with a lucidity of language and a vigor of imagination never surpassed in the history of literature.

With this brief outline of Dante's life and works I introduce my readers to the numerous contributors to my Dante anthology. This tribute of a generation living six hundred years after the Poet, shows what words of Dante the world today repeats and what elements of his work it thinks are of superlative, permanent value. The contributions, representing Church and State, king and citizen, author and reader have come from Asia, Europe and America, a proof, if one were needed, that Dante has broken down the barriers of time and space and crossed national border lines. His is a language that is indeed universal, for he speaks for all peoples and for all times.

This collection is notable for many things. Students of literature are aware of the limited quotability of Dante's words as compared, for instance, with Shakespeare's or Goethe's. That is naturally so because the perfection of the great Florentine's work lies in its ensemble and not in isolated passages, even though these are incomparable. Moreover the Divine Comedy is an allegory so replete with philosophical and theological lore, that it does not lend itself easily to provide apt phrases for the explication of modern instances. Hence some Dante lovers, not represented in these pages, do not hesitate to declare that it is almost impossible to restrict one's choice to any favourite line or passage. In this decision they are one with Bernard Shaw who writes that the pudding is more to him than the plums. Others compare, as did Carlyle and Longfellow, the Divine Comedy to an awe-inspiring cathedral of the Middle Ages. How can one enraptured by the whole, so sublime in its architectonic perfection, express a preference for any of its parts? Yet my three hundred and eighty-six contributors have done that without sacrificing their admiration for the ensemble. They have discovered enshrined in this gothic cathedral a picturesque sculpture, a marvelous stained glass window, an altar, perfect in form

and most delicate in carving, an arching through which one gets a vista of the sublime. But they realize that not one of these furnishings or details would have importance in itself, as if wholly detached from the edifice which has determined and inspired it. This compilation then, has succeeded in a task which apparently was impossible of attainment. It gives to the world, for the first time, a book of preferred Dantean passages sponsored and explained by the most distinguished scholars of our day. The full purpose of the compilation will not be secured unless these selections lead the reader to the study of Dante, for it is worth while repeating, and I am glad to do it in the words of him who first stimulated my interest in Dante, Dr. Charles Allen Dinsmore: "The power and delight of the Divine Comedy is not in the exceptional beauty of isolated passages or in its brilliant episodes; rather it lies in Dante's imaginative presentation of the whole scheme of things—the struggling soul of man set in the majesty of the universe, moving from the depths of Hell to the vision of God."

Perhaps the most touching and remarkable thing about this collection is the frank way in which many contributors have bared their most intimate thoughts. Some tell us that they live by Dante. One author, in a paragraph not here quoted, states without irreverence for God's word that Dante is his Bible. Another makes it known that his wavering faith finds support in Dante's teachings. This collection is valuable also for information that upsets preconceived notions as to the relative popularity of the three canticles. It used to be said that the Inferno had the most common appeal because it was most easily understood, that Purgatorio next aroused interest because of the artistic perfection of the whole canticle, that Paradiso was beyond understanding and enjoyment. This anthology shows that Paradiso appeals with its loftiest mysticism, to one hundred and forty-seven of my collaborators, while one hundred and twenty-eight express their preference for Inferno and ninety-five for Purgatorio.

Furthermore, this selection of favourite passages is illustrative of the innermost thoughts and aspirations of the writers. The quotation favoured by the greatest number are the words which "appear to have an inexpressible majesty of truth about

them, to be almost as if they were spoken from the very mouth of God." (William Ewart Gladstone.) I refer to the line: "In His will is our peace." Certainly the preference for this verse and the comments added justify the conclusion that the writers see in submission to the Divine Will their own peace and the safety of society. No less informing of the spiritual is the choice which comes second. It is St. Bernard's Prayer to the Blessed Virgin, a preference the more remarkable because several of the writers are not of the communion which holds the Virgin Mother in its creed.

Most of my collaborators are college or university professors. That fact is not without significance. With Dante in their heart and on their lips they may yet be able to clarify the conditions, and solve the problems which perplex, distress and alarm educators today. According to a report presented at a conference held in February, 1928, at Princeton University to discuss "religion among college men," eight hundred out of every group of one thousand confessed that they are uninfluenced directly by religion, the only sure basis for true morality. To all college students, as to our generation, wearied by doubt, terrified by crime, groping in moral darkness for light, comes Dante with his beautiful vision that satisfies the aching heart and lessens the woes of a tortured world. "This recognition of Dante's place in our western civilization is nothing less than a confession of faith, unconscious, it may be, or hardly self-conscious, faith in the sublime truth, so widely ignored in these latter days, though it was taught by Plato, four hundred years before Christ, that 'man is a plant not of earthly but of heavenly growth.' Men who have ceased to listen to preachers and to priests will yet, in spite of themselves, lend an ear to poets when they sing; and that is the burden of every true poet's song, supremely so of Dante's." * He preaches the Gospel of Duty. As a guide for our journey on earth he offers us a philosophy with "unity of thought and coherence of life." As a theologian, with an intense faith that satisfies the mind and warms the heart, he teaches us "a solemn law in the universe pointing out man's destiny with an awful and beautiful certainty." (Carlyle.)

* *Charles Eliot Norton and the Study of Dante"* by Herbert H. Yeames, an article in The Harvard Graduates' Magazine, March 1928.

Not his own doctrine does Dante teach but that of "the Son of God who had humbled Himself to become man." (Par. VII, 118.) He tells us: "It is the most truthful doctrine of Christ, which is the way, the truth and the light; the way, because through it, without obstruction we proceed to the happiness of immortality; the truth, because it is free from all error; the light, because it illumines us in the darkness of worldly ignorance." (Conv. II, 9.)

Several passages have been inserted with comments by writers of the past, in order that the reader may have before him the principal, if not the best, parts of the great Poet's work. Some of the quotations given in this book are elucidated by several or many comments. As in the case of a newspaper's publishing upon the death of a distinguished citizen columns of tributes to his character and service by those who knew him well—tributes which have a genuine news-value—so, these Dantean comments, even if here and there occurs repetition or overlapping of the same idea, are of permanent worth, more particularly as the comments come from authors of different nationalities and express an agreement of appreciation the more remarkable because of the difference in religious belief, and literary or political activities of the writers.

The text followed is the Testo Critico della Società Dantesca Italiana. The literal translation is based upon that of Norton, Vernon, Duncan and the Temple Classics.

It only remains to express my deepest thanks to my collaborators without whose generous coöperation this work would have been impossible. My special gratitude goes to Monsignor Mariano Ugolini of Rome, Monsignor Giovanni Mesini of Ravenna, Italy, Father Emil Hoffet of Paris, Fathers Emile Mattern S. J. and Tacchi-Venturi S. J. of Rome, Italy, for their valuable assistance in interesting Dante students abroad in this venture.

TO DANTE.

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!

The voice of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song till the familiar lines
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, from the sixth sonnet to accompany the translation.

COMMENT.

I am glad to quote the lines of Longfellow, because Dante has ever been loved of poets and the wealth of his imagery, and the loftiness and reverence of his imagination, have enriched and stimulated those of like mind. Thus has his influence gone around the world in ever widening circles.

HANNAH AMELIA DAVIDSON, Claremont, Calif. Author, editor and publisher of The Study Guide Series (10 books).

Se Dio ti lasci, lettor, prender frutto di tua lezione. Inf. XX, 19

May God grant, Reader, that thou profit from thy reading.

THE GARDEN WHERE THERE IS NO WINTER.

Behold the portal: open wide it stands,
  And the long reaches shine and still allure
  To seek their nobler depths serene, secure,
And watch the waters kiss the yellow sands
That gentle winds stir with their sweet commands.
  These stately growths from age to age endure,
  These splendid blooms glow in the sunlight pure,
These wondrous works of human hearts and hands.

Over the charmed space no storm may rest,
  The gloomy hours avoid the magic bound.
Homer dwells here, Virgil, and all the blest
  Whose perfumed color lights Time's mighty round:
Pluck the fruit freely, Reader, and partake,
God wills it—for the enchanted Soul's fair sake.

LOUIS JAMES BLOCK PH. D., Oak Park, Ill, author of Dramatic Sketches and Poems.

VITA NUOVA

In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria dinanzi a la quale poco si potrebbe leggere, si trova una rubrica la quale dice: *Incipit vita nova.* I. 1.

In that part of the book of my memory before which little can be read, is found a rubric which says: *Incipit Vita Nova* (The New Life Begins.)

COMMENT.

Incipit Vita Nova. So Dante recorded his first sight of Beatrice, and the lordship Love began to exert.

Thenceforward the sentence has been used to indicate a new life that so begins for man and woman. But also it applies to each new stage of a growing life, to the school boy's promotion from grade to grade, to his entering college, to his Commencement, to his choosing a profession, entering new employment, and a new neighborhood, reading the epoch-making book, making the momentous choice of enlistment in the forces for good, to his becoming a husband, a father, a community worker, a leader.

MERRITT STARR LL. D., Chicago, Ill., author, Dante Six Hundred Years After.

LOVE AND NOBILITY.

Amore e'l cor gentil sono una cosa,
sì come il saggio in suo dittare pone,
e così esser l'un sanza l'altro osa
com' alma razional sanza ragione.
Falli natura quand'è amorosa,
Amor per sire e 'l cor per sua magione,
dentro la qual dormendo si riposa
tal volta poca e tal lunga stagione.

Bieltate appare in saggia donna pui,
che piace a gli occhi sì, che dentro al core
nasce un disio de la cosa piacente;
e tanto dura talora in costui,
che fa svegliar lo spirito d'Amore.
E simil face in donna omo valente. XX, 10.

Love is but one thing with the gentle heart,
As in the saying of the sage we find;
Thus one from other cannot be apart,
More than the reason from the reasoning mind.
When Nature amorous becomes, she makes
Love then her Lord, the heart his dwelling-place,
Within which, sleeping, his repose he takes,
Sometimes for brief, and sometimes for long space.
Beauty in lady sage doth then appear
Which pleaseth so the eyes, that in the heart
Desire for the pleasing thing hath birth;
And sometimes it so long abideth there,
It makes Love's spirit wide awake to start:
The like in lady doth a man of worth.

Charles Eliot Norton's translation, with the permission of, and by special arrangements with, the author's publishers, Houghton Mifflin Co.

COMMENT.

Dante has been a constant companion and teacher with me since my youth. The line that has been most in my mind and on my lips all these years is

Amore e'l cor gentil sono una cosa.

This for precision and beauty of language. The line is engraved on a ring that I have worn for fifty years. (Vide The Roamer p. 132.)

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY LITT. D., Beverly, Mass., author of Great Writers, The Inspiration of Poetry, etc.

THE IDEAL BELOVED.

Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare
la donna mia quand' ella altrui saluta,
ch' ogne lingua deven tremando muta,
e li occhi no l'ardiscon di guardare.

Ella si va, sentendosi laudare,
benignamente d'umiltà vestuta;
e par che sia una cosa venuta
da cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.
Mostrasi sì piacente a chi la mira,
che dà per li occhi una dolcezza al core,
che 'ntender no la può chi no la prova:
e par che de la sua labbia si mova
un spirito soave pien d'amore,
che va dicendo a l'anima: Sospira. XXVI, 26.

So gentle and so gracious doth appear
My lady when she giveth her salute,
That every tongue becometh, trembling, mute;
Nor do the eyes to look upon her dare.
Although she hears her praises, she doth go
Benignly vested with humility;
And like a thing come down, she seems to be,
From heaven to earth, a miracle to show.
So pleaseth she whoever cometh nigh,
She gives the heart a sweetness through the eyes,
Which none can understand who doth not prove.
And from her countenance there seems to move
A spirit sweet and in Love's very guise,
Who to the soul, in going, sayeth: Sigh!

Charles Eliot Norton's translation.

COMMENT.

That sonnet, in my opinion, is the greatest lyric in the world.

Austin O'Malley, Ph.D., M.D., LL.D., Philadelphia, Pa. Author, Essays in Pastoral Medicine, Keystones of Thought etc.

BEATRICE.

Contra questo avversario de la ragione si levoe un die, quasi ne l' ora de la nona, una forte imaginazione in me, che mi parve vedere questa gloriosa Beatrice con quelle vestimenta sanguigne co le quali apparve prima a li occhi miei; e pareami giovane in simile etade in quale io prima la vidi. XXXIX, 1.

Against this adversary of the reason there arose one day, about the hour of nones, a strong imagination within me; for I seemed to see this glorified Beatrice in those crimson garments in which she had first appeared to my eyes, and she seemed to be young, of the same age as when I first saw her. XL, 1.

Charles Eliot Norton's translation.

COMMENT.

This is my favourite quotation from Dante. One hardly likes to comment on one's choice where there are so many precious gems. Perhaps I may give a hint by noting that those words conclude my postscript to my edition of Boccaccio's Olympia, the companion poem to our English contemporary elegy, entitled "Pearl."

Sir Israel Gollanz, London, England. Professor of English Language and Literature, in the University of London. General editor of the Temple Classics.

DANTE'S RESOLUTION TO GLORIFY BEATRICE.

Appresso questo sonetto apparve a me una mirabile visione, ne la quale io vidi cose che mi fecero proporre di non dire più di questa benedetta infino a tanto che io potesse più degnamente trattare di lei. E di venire a ciò io studio quanto posso, sì com'ella sae veracemente. Sì che, se piacere sarà di colui a cui tutte le cose vivono, che la mia vita duri per alquanti anni, io spero di dicer di lei quello che mai non fue detto d'alcuna. E poi piaccia a colui che è sire de la cortesia, che la mia anima se ne possa gire a vedere la gloria de la sua donna, cioè di quella benedetta Beatrice, la quale gloriosamente mira ne la faccia di colui *qui est per omnia secula benedictus.* XLII, 1-12.

After (writing) this sonnet, a wonderful vision appeared to me, in which I saw things which made me resolve to speak no more of this blessed one, until I could more worthily treat of her. And to attain to this, I study to the utmost of my power, as she truly knows. So that, if it shall please Him through whom all things live, that my life be prolonged for some years, I hope to say of her what was never said of any woman.*

* "Dante kept, and how nobly! (by the composition of the Divine Comedy) the promise which he had made to his Beatrice, who, since the age of nine, had been an ever increasing need of his soul and who gave to it 'its unity and the ceaseless rhythm of its song.' And he kept it as only he could keep it. For only

And then may it please Him who is the Lord of Grace, that my soul may go to behold the glory of its lady, namely, of that blessed Beatrice, who in glory looks upon the face of Him *qui est per omnia secula benedictus.* (who is blessed forever). XLIII.

Charles Eliot Norton's translation.

COMMENT.

That passage expresses, I believe, the peculiar characteristics that served to bring about Dante's true position in the history of poetry. I refer to his foresight and anticipation of conceptions of future scientists, and even of the psychically-minded both in his own and future times, that his work would merit immortality. His clairvoyance pierces the centuries; his confidence in his own powers shows him posterity honoring him as "l'altissimo poeta." So the passage is noteworthy as indicating the form which Dante gave to his greatest poem. We must infer that Dante supposed himself to have had an external vision of Beatrice, clearly separated from that which might be expressed in a dream, and that this vision made "through the mediation of loving and friendly spirits" was of such a character as to cause him to spend most of the rest of his life in developing from his own imagination the general conception of justice underlying his great poem.

GEORGE L. RAYMOND, L.H.D., Washington, D. C., author of Dante and Collected Verse.

he could keep it who was deeply imbued with the childlike faith of the Middle Ages; who was a master of all the knowledge of his time; who was a consummate theologian, such as Giovanni da Virgilio averred Dante to be—'Theologus Dantes, nullius dogmatis expers—' and who, besides this, was, as the same singer declared, 'Gloria Musarum—the sovran poet of the world.'" J. A. Zahm, *Great Inspirers,* p. 180. (D. Appleton & Company.)

RIME.

VIRTUE.

Vertute .....
per lo corto viaggio
conserva, adorna, accresce ciò che trova. Rime CVI, 27, 36, 37

Virtue in her short pilgrimage preserves, adorns, enriches what she finds.

COMMENT.

Although you cannot tell these days what is going to happen to you if you express your favourite quotation, I can give the foregoing passage without really hurting, I am sure, any political party now operating in this country.

Don Marquis, New York City. Author of Old Soak; The Dark Hours, etc.

FLORENCE.

O montanina mia canzon, tu vai:
forse vedrai Fiorenza, la mia terra,
che fuor di sè mi serra,
vota d'amore e nuda di pietate. CXVI, 76-79.

Dear mountain song of mine, thou goest thy way,
Perchance thou'lt Florence see, mine own dear land,
That drives me doomed and banned,
Showing no pity, and devoid of love.

Plumtre's translation.

COMMENT.

1—I went to Florence not to see the monuments whose loveliness when my eyes beheld them, made my heart ache with longing, but because it was Dante's city. Was it here that he passed along the Arno, or here that he raised his eyes to Beatrice, or from this hill did his exile glance travel back to valley, and stream and tower?

Paul L. Blakely, S.J., New York City. Associate Editor of America.

2—These lines always recall to me that picture in the Duomo at Florence, which so dramatically epitomized Dante's life. He stands a colossal figure before the closed gates of Florence, towering above them and showing, with a gesture of infinite pathos, the Hell, Purgatory and Heaven which little Florence excludes with him. The universe is his, yet he yearns over "Fiorenza, la mia terra." I doubt whether this passage and my reason for loving it would interest anyone but myself and lovers of Dante who recognize in him in all his phases "the central man of all the world."

Amelia Josephine Burr, Englewood, N. J., author of A Child's Garden in India, etc.

IL CONVIVIO (THE BANQUET).

DANTE, THE POOR EXILE.

Veramente io sono stato legno sanza vela e sanza governo, portato a diversi porti e foci e liti dal vento secco che vapora la dolorsa povertade. I, 3, 23.

Truly have I been a vessel without sail and without rudder borne to divers ports and shores and havens by the dry wind that blows from dolorous poverty.

COMMENT.

Man, historian, theologian, philosopher, poet, prophet, Dante was one and all and much beside. As man, he fills us with his two penetrating passions, Florence and Beatrice, and for these he repeatedly vents his love and grief in prose and verse.

But even more troubles and moves me the ingenuous anguish of the incontinently aging Dante, as, undecked by the gracious garments of poetry, it transpires in this naked, bleeding phrase of the Convivio.

EDWIN B. DAVIS, Professor of Romance Languages, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J.

ITALIAN, DANTE'S MOTHER TONGUE

Lo naturale amore a propria loquela. I, 5, 7.

A natural love of one's own tongue.

COMMENT.

The divine Dante, besides having written marvelous poetry and enriched the literature of his country with the immortal offspring of his muse, was a lover of the Italian language and knew its capacities better than any contemporary. He, when writing the tract, "Il Convivio," was the first to use Italian instead of Latin for the purposes of serious scholarly argu-

ment. With all his admiration for Virgil and his idiom, Inf. I, 85

"Tu se 'lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore:
tu se' solo colui da cu' io tolsi
lo bello stile che m'ha fatto onore." Cf. II Conv, I, 5, 13.

he is induced to write in Italian by the love of his mother-tongue—*Naturale amore a propia loquela.* It is this love which inspires the fine passage. Conv. I, 13, 43. seq.: "From the beginning of my life I have been linked to it," i.e., the vernacular, "by the habit of close intercourse; I have been constantly using it in my meditations, comments and questionings. If friendship may be held to increase by familiarity, it is evident that in me it must have grown to the utmost extent, for I have spent the whole of my time with the Italian language. . . ." He is convinced that this Italian treatise of his will prove "a new light, a new sun, which shall rise where the old," i.e., the Latin, "is setting, and which shall give light to those who are in the shade and in darkness on account of the old sun not affording them light." Conv. I, 13, 60. seq. And in order to convince the learned of the value and significance of the vernacular idiom, he writes for them the Latin treatise "De Vulgari Eloquentia."

This ardent love of his mother tongue, this *naturale amore a propia loquela,* can be fully understood and appreciated by those only who have, for over a hundred years, been debarred from its employment in all the various currents of the full blown tide of national life, who have not even been permitted to say the Lord's prayer aloud in their own language,—such was the predicament of the Polish people when, a downtrodden nation, it shrank under the conquering heel of the German or Russian usurper.

That is why Dante, the improver, the connoisseur, the lover of his *propria loquela,* is inexpressibly dear to me.

Jan Sajdak, Ph.D., Professor of Philology, National University of Posen, Poland.

THE LATIN PEOPLE.

Più dolce natura in segnoreggiando, e più forte in sostenendo, e più sottile in acquistando nè fu nè fia che quella de la gente latina. IV, 4, 67.

A nature more gentle in governing, more powerful in maintaining, and more subtle in acquiring, than that of the Latin people there never was and never will be.

COMMENT.

The genteel Latin blood has never been more rightly characterized.

AMERINDO CAMILLI, Dantist, Secretary of the Partito Nazionale Fasciata, Federazione Provinciale Picena, Italy.

DE VULGARI ELOQUENTIA.

NATIVE COUNTRY.

Nos autem, cui mundus est patria velut piscibus equor, quanquam Sarnum biberimus ante dentes et Florentiam adeo diligamus ut quia dileximus exilium patiamur iniuste, rationi magis quam sensui spatulas nostri iudicii podiamus. Et quamvis ad voluptatem nostram, sive nostre sensualitatis quietem, in terris amenior locus quam Florentia non existat, revolventes et poetarum et aliorum scriptorum volumina, quibus mundus universaliter et membratim describitur, ratiocinantesque in nobis situationes varias mundi locorum et eorum habitudinem ad utrunque polum et circulum equatorem, multas esse perpendimus firmiterque censemus et magis nobiles et magis delitiosas et regiones et urbes quam Tusciam et Florentiam, unde sumus oriundus et civis, et plerasque nationes et gentes delectabiliori atque utiliori sermone uti quam Latinos. I. VI.

But we, to whom the world is our native country, just as the sea is to the fish, though we drank of Arno before our teeth appeared, and though we love Florence so dearly that for the love we bore her we are wrongfully suffering exile—we rest the shoulders of our judgment on reason rather than on feeling. And although as regards our own pleasure or sensuous comfort there exists no more agreeable place in the world than Florence, still, when we turn over the volumes both of poets and other writers in which the world is generally and particularly described, and take account within ourselves of the various situations of the places of the world and their arrangement with respect to the two poles and to the equator, our deliberate and firm opinion is that there are many countries and cities both nobler and more delightful than Tuscany and Florence of which we are a native and a citizen, and also that a great many nations and races use a speech both more agreeable and more serviceable than the Italians do.

COMMENT.

1—When the great Florentine said that his native country was the world as that of the fish is the sea, he sincerely proclaimed himself a citizen of the world and recognized all men as brothers whom he could not bear to see destroying one an-

other in fratricidal wars, but whom he ardently hoped to see united under one supreme political direction which would preserve peace among them forever.

John J. Rolbiecki, S.T.D. Author, Political Philosophy of Dante. Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.

2—How beautiful a thing it is that here the greatest Italian poet, who is called by his people their national poet, expresses, with the calm breadth of mind of a philosopher, a cosmopolitan Credo! He has been made competent to do this, however, not only by the thinking of the time, which had not yet become nationalistic, Middle-Aged, ecclesiastical, but also by the doctrine of ancient tradition. With the picture of the fishes in the sea, Dante follows a passage in Ovid's Fasti (I, 493), in which Carmenta seeks, in a lengthy speech of consolation, to solace her son Evander, who had migrated from Arcadia to Italy, on his exile from his native land:

> Omne solum forti patria est, ut piscibus aequor,
> ut volucri, vacuo quidquid in orbe patet.

This statement of solace is a composition formed quite after the plan of consoling speeches extant in Greek to us, and the several reasons for consolation are derived from Greek literature. Ovid's comparison with the birds of the air comes from Attic tragedy, which in turn adopts, in changed form, a maxim of the great naturalist and thinker, Democritus. Democritus had said (Fragment 247 Diels): *ἀνδρὶ σοφῶ πασα γῆ βατή ψυχῆς γὰρ αγαθῆς πατρὶς ὁ ζύμπας κόσμος.* Democritus may have learned more wisdom outside of his native city of Abdera than at home.

Almost certainly the following line is derived from the tragedy "Tenkros" of Sophocles:

ἀνδρῶν γὰρ επιφανων ἅπασα γῆ πατρις

Teucer hereby consoles his comrades who, as he, must go into exile, by saying to them, "We can acquire for ourselves a fatherland anywhere." Here, he is a representative of the rapidly spreading Attic realm of the fifth century B.C.

Euripides has farther developed this (Fragment 1047 Nauck):

ἅπας μὲν ἀὴρ ἀετῷ περάσιμος
ἅπασα δὲ χυὼν ανδρὶ γενναίῳ πατρίς

and in "Phæton" (Fragment 777 Nauck):

ὡς πανταχοῦ γε πατρὶς ἡ βόσκουσα γῆ

With the change ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ ταφος the Thucydidean Pericles, in the famous funeral oration (Thucyd. II 43) consoles the Athenians on their lost dead: a glorious inscriptionless engraving on the memory of all men ranks higher than a regular grave in the soil of one's ancestors,—a point of view from which the Athenians in the Arginusæ trial, 405 B.C., deviated in an unexpected direction.

The Latin tragedy-poet Pacuvius has evidently adopted the Sophoclean Teucros. With him the line of consolation on exile reads as follows:

Patria est ubicumque est bene,

given to us by Cicero, Tuscul. disput, V 37, 108; this we usually quote in the somewhat altered form:

Ubi bene, ibi patria.

This version, in somewhat lighter vein, likewise goes back to a Greek tragedian of the fifth century, whom we can not definitely identify. He has replaced the boldly confident saying of the Sophoclean Teucer by the frivolous one:

τῶ γὰρ καλῶς πρασσοντι πᾶσα γῆ πατρίς

(Nauck adesp, 318). Here speaks an intellectually superior poet belonging to the period of the Sophists, who perceives that the fatherland is only *νόμος*, not *φύσις*: a *νόμος* as to the relationship of which the international intellectual community of cosmopolitan, thinking *σοφοί* are smilingly agreed. According to this, the god Hermes, in the "Plutos" of Aristophanes (1151) addresses someone about to emigrate:

πατρὶς γάρ ἐστι πασ' ἵν' ἂν πράττῃ τις εὖ.

Aristophanes likes to have his good-for-nothings express scandalous Euripidean maxims.

The Greeks' feeling of superiority over the "Barbarians,"

which developed especially after the Persian wars, was, moreover, not pierced by the wisdom of sage or sophist teaching cosmopolitanism. The theoretic assertion that one can, in case of necessity, exist apart from one's usual Polis, is rather incidental grim humor in face of the thought of his being obliged to go into exile. The national arrogance of the Greeks toward the other nations was allayed only in Hellenistic times, when the philosophic ideas of the equality of all men, of the consensus gentium, of a world-state, became current among men. These ideas were transmitted to the Christian Middle Ages.

Compare: Wünsch, Rhein Museum, 56 (1901), 398 ff. Nestle, Euripides, the Poet of the Greek Aufklärung, Stuttgart, 1901, 365 ff. Jüthner, Hellenes and Barbarians, Leipzig, 1923, 20 ff. Luria, Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of Urss, Leningrad, 1925, B. S. 78 ff.

Franz Dornseiff, Ph.D., professor, University of Greifswald, Germany. Translator with Dr. Joseph Balogh of "De Vulgaria Eloquentia."

THE POWER OF HUMAN SPEECH.

Quod autem sit exaltatum potestate, videtur. Et quid maioris potestatis est quam quod humana corda versare potest, ita ut nolentem volentem et volentem nolentem faciat, velut ipsum et fecit et facit." I, 17. 18.

That the vernacular has been exalted by power is manifest. For what is more powerful than that which is able to turn human hearts, converting the unwilling into the willing and the willing into the unwilling? And this is what human speech has done and still does.

COMMENT.

Thus, according to the poet, the greatest of the powers embraced in human intelligence is that of *"speech."* This involves a blending of two elements of thought,—by our speech we sway the hearts of our fellow-men; by our speech we govern the purposes of others.

This thought is the thought of the poet immersed in admiration of the mystical power of his own medium and praising it; but by the time it assumes a fixed form or rather becomes stereotyped, the poet has become absorbed in the

scholastic thinker in perpetual search of the systematic. The poet of the trecento is still far from free and cannot soar whither his impulse and imagination drive him. Behind him stands the intellectual convention of the ancient and medieval worlds: the *rhetor*. He cannot say what he would have said without a doubt five hundred years later: "Speech is omnipotent, for it transplants feelings, raises desires, creates moods, rouses and calms passions,—miraculously mysterious instrument of my art." All this is present in Dante's mind, but at the first attempt he fails to find the fitting expression—*"humana corda versare potest"*—and so goes off at an angle to praise rhetoric. Speech turns hearts and governs the will.

It is the government of the will that is still the greatest glory of human speech! This is a thought of antiquity transferred to the Middle Ages by St. Augustine * and Cassiodorus.† The poet, too, is still fettered by the Thomistic formulas: *Nolentem volentem et volentem nolentem facere!* This is the *philosopher's* idea of the marvellous power of speech; and his way of thinking is that of the rhetorician and the jurist: by the power of my words I shall overcome thy will and my will shall be thine.

But—he continues—I enthrall thy heart and turn it: *cor humanum verso*. It may be (who knows?) that to Dante "heart" and "will" are terms still expressing kindred notions. However the words of the sentence really hide latent treasures. For that which turns the human heart is not simply speech or language in general, but a particular tongue: the vernacular now triumphantly asserting its preëminence. *Vulgare de quo loquimur sublimatum est magistratu et potestate.* (The vernacular, of which we are speaking, has been exalted by training and power). The vernacular—in this case the Italian language refined into the literary medium—will be the grand instrument of the divine poet. With it he will turn the heart of a whole world. This magnificent sentence, which we have taken from his little essay on the importance of the vernacular in the life of a nation, symbolises exactly Dante's place in history, it is fed by the wealth of thought of the antique past, it is formulated in the terminology of medieval scholasticism,

* De Civ. Dei XXI, 24.
† Varia, Praef. (Mommsen) 5.

but its perspective opens towards the modern world; it is in the spirit of the modern world that Dante senses and portrays the power and might of the language of poetry.

Joseph Balogh, Ph.D., professor at the National University, Budapest, Hungary.

DE MONARCHIA.

THE TEMPORAL AND THE SPIRITUAL POWERS.

Regnum temporale non recipit esse a spirituali, nec virtutem que est eius auctoritas, nec etiam operationem simpliciter; sed bene ab eo recipit ut virtuosius operetur per lucem gratie, quam in celo Deus et in terra benedictio summi Pontificis infundit illi. III, 4, 96.

The temporal power does not receive its being from the spiritual power, nor its power which is its authority, nor its working considered in itself. Yet it is good that the temporal power does receive from the spiritual the means of working more effectively by the light of the grace bestowed upon it by God in heaven and by the benediction of the Supreme Pontiff upon earth.

COMMENT.

Dante planned to compose the Divine Comedy as a work of poetry incorporating doctrine, truth and instruction that would be the synthesis of the real and the transcendental, of heaven and earth, of time and eternity. Although his is the glory of having embellished philosophy with images in the most splendid literary record of which a people might boast, he is not a creator of new theories, but rather an assimilator and proclaimer of them. In the matter of political doctrines he is, however, a pioneer. We find, indeed, that he goes beyond the sphere of the Ghibelline authors who pictured two illimitable powers, the pontifical and the imperial, as guardians over the spiritual and the temporal felicity of the Christian world in ideal accord. He is the first author of the Middle Ages who gives back to the State its civil function, proclaiming the absolute sovereignty of the Church in spiritual matters and of the State in temporal affairs, together with a coördination of both powers, each in its own sphere of action. He concedes to ecclesiastical authority the right to exercise a directive power over the State because the latter receives from the former its grace, that is, the moral influence by which the

civil government more efficaciously attains its end ("ut virtuosius operetur per lucem gratie"). He acknowledges that the civil power which has been instituted to lead mankind to terrestrial happiness procurable by reason ("per philosophica documenta") depends in a certain manner on the spiritual the end of which is to guide man to celestial felicity through faith and the practice of virtue ("per documenta spiritualia"). The directive power of the Church, however, is merely moral, and subordination must be placed in the order of ends and final purposes.

With these political doctrines Dante anticipated the speculations of many Catholic thinkers of modern times who put forth the concept of a state independent of the Church, in temporal matters, and at the same time preserving unimpaired the autonomy placed under its direction.

Ugo Mariani, O.S.A. College of the Blessed Trinity, Viterbo, Italy, author of Scrittori politici agostiniani del secolo XIV.

THE DIVINE COMEDY.

COMMENT.

1—I wish to express my admiration for the Catholic spirit of Dante. His interest in astronomy led me to penetrate the invisible world—the world of souls and of Divinity. As a poet and a Christian he saw everything. He is of earth only a short time; in the hereafter he truly lives even while he walks the earth. So he belongs to immensity and to the harmony of the spheres. In this age of subjection to the mechanical, of the decadence of the humanities, of the restriction of the divine, it is surely a happy idea to propose Dante to the admiration of the world.

TANCRED ROTHE, honorary Professor of Law, Catholic University of Lille, France.

2—Dante is so universal that every circumstance and feeling and idea find expression in him. There, in the Divine Comedy, carved with the powerful chisel of Michelangelo, painted with the fascinating colours of Titian and Raphael, you have before you the whole of human experience, of human history, of human life, with its light and darkness, its joy and sorrow, its love and hatred, its goodness and wickedness, its heavenly emotions and devilish passions, its divine peace and unendurable pain; there, expressed in the forms of perfect Art, everything that moves the human mind and heart, resounds and echoes in the strains of immortal music; and thus all persons in all times and conditions of society, and every person in all the most various moments of his individual life, will find in some place or other of the Universal Poem the proper nourishment to their souls, relief in time of trouble, assistance in time of need, joy in hours of happiness, rest in hours of peace, respondence, communion, sympathy with everything a human soul can feel and wish and require.

Guglielmo Salvadori, Ph.D., Begnins (Vaud) Switzerland. Sometime Lecturer on Moral Philosophy in the University of Rome.

THE INFERNO.

Many admirable critics place the Inferno much below the other two divisions of the Divine Comedy. I hesitate to fend against any of this opinion, chiefly, I think, because I am so specially conscious of the beauty both of the Purgatorio and the Paradiso. Sincerely, however, I am obliged to say that I consider that while the other two divisions contain more supernal beauty, the Inferno is supreme in power and energy.

John Cavanaugh, DD., LLD., professor of English, University of Notre Dame, Ind. Author of Priests of Holy Cross.

THE INFERNO.

CANTO I.

LIFE'S DARK WOOD.

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
chè la diritta via era smarrita.
Ah quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinnova la paura!
Tant' è amara che poco è più morte;
ma per trattar del ben ch' io vi trovai,
dirò de l'altre cose ch' io v'ho scorte.
Io non so ben ridir com' io v'entrai,
tant' era pieno di sonno a quel punto
che la verace via abbandonai.
Ma poi ch' i' fui al piè d' un colle giunto,
là dove terminava quella valle
che m'avea di paura il cor compunto,
guardai in alto, e vidi le sue spalle
vestite già de'raggi del pianeta
che mena dritto altrui per ogni calle.

Allor fu la paura un poco queta
che nel lago del cor m' era durata
la notte ch' io passai con tanta pieta.
E come quei che con lena affannata
uscito fuor del pelago a la riva,
si volge a l'acqua perigliosa e guata,
così l'animo mio, ch' ancor fuggiva,
si volse a rietro a rimirar lo passo
che non lasciò già mai persona viva. 1-27.

In the middle of the journey of our life I found myself (wandering) through a dark wood, for I had lost the right path. Ah! how hard a thing it is to tell what a wild rough and stubborn wood this was—the very thought of which renews the fear. So bitter is it that death is hardly more so; but to treat of the good that I found in it I will relate the other things I saw there.

How I entered there I cannot rightly tell, so full of sleep was I at the time when I left the true way. But after I had reached the foot of a Hill there where the valley ended which had pierced my heart with fear, I looked up and saw the shoulders already clothed with the rays of that Planet which leads men straight on every path. Then the fear was somewhat calmed that had dwelt in the lake of my heart during the night that I had passed in so much anguish. And as he who with panting breath, has escaped to the shore from the deep sea turns to gaze on the perilous waters, so my mind, still fleeing, turned back to contemplate that pass (the dark wood) which no living person ever quitted.

COMMENT.

1—These lines have always appealed most movingly to me, because of their depth of thought and unparalleled inspirational power. The diction is most simple and beautiful. The images are not bound by any epoch in the existence of man. The whole work is immortal, for it is supreme in its applicability to Everyman.

J. K. Kochanowski, Ph.D., former rector of the University of Warsaw, Poland, member of the Polish Academy of Learning.

2—Each time I take in my hand the Divine Comedy, I hasten to reread this mysterious introduction of the poem, in which are hidden so much mystery and food for endless meditation. It is not the most beautiful section—but it is the part

I know by heart the best; the part that has always sufficed to create the most profound reverie.

PIERRE DE NOLHAC, member of the French Academy, director of the Musée Jacquemart-André of the Institute of France, Paris.

3—No written work possesses a finer beginning. It has the nobility and majesty of an ancient arch of triumph. It is the portal through which one enters suddenly into an incomparable temple.

This first canto is not merely pure poetry: it is also music and painting; it is a great harmony nothing can equal.

JEAN JAMES VARIOT, dramatist and novelist, Versailles, France.

4—From the very first lines the Divine Comedy holds the reader, it seizes the soul like all true poetry, in the depths of its humanity. My favorite lines are 1 to 7 of this Canto because of their universal and profound application. Each man can say of himself:—

1. "THOU ART GUILTY"—for in the bottom of his heart he groans and weeps tears of ennui and disgust at his orgies of pleasure and sins.

2. "THOU ART PENITENT"—because he must thank God for having led him through the vale of obscurities, doubts, deceptions, sorrows, and almost despair to ultimate light and happiness.

3. "THOU ART JUST"—since divine grace, to raise him to perfection, has purified him during his sojourn in the dark night so crucifying to his senses and mind.

Of this "Dark Night of the Soul," none could speak better than that canonized poet, St. John of the Cross, whose fascinating mystical ardour is made to live again in these days by the *Semaine* of Bruges. This great poet of divine love suggests a new explanation of the great Christian poet, Dante. Both are experts in the knowledge of the mysterious heart of man who seems to lose himself only to have God rescue him from his night.

JOSEPH ZAMANSKI, president of the Centre Catholique, Paris.

THE THREE BEASTS.

Ed ecco, quasi al cominciar de l' erta
una lonza leggiera e presta molto,
che di pel maculato era coverta;
e non mi si partia dinanzi al volto,
anzi impediva tanto il mio cammino,
ch' i' fui per ritornar più volte volto.
Temp' era dal principio del mattino,
e 'l sol montava 'n su con quelle stelle
ch' eran con lui quando l'amor divino
mosse di prima quelle cose belle;
sì ch' a bene sperar m'era cagione
di quella fera a la gaetta pelle
l'ora del tempo e la dolce stagione;
ma non sì che paura non mi desse
la vista che m'apparve d'un leone.
Questi parea che contra me venesse
con la test' alta e con rabbiosa fame,
sì che parea che l' aere ne temesse.
Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
sembiava carca ne la sua magrezza,
e molte genti fè già viver grame,
questa mi porse tanto di gravezza
con la paura ch' uscia di sua vista,
ch' io perdei la speranza de l' altezza. 31-54.

And behold, almost at the commencement of the steep, a Leopard, light and exceedingly nimble, which was covered with a spotted hide. And it would not withdraw from before my face, nay it was impeding my way so much, that I had often turned to go back. The time was at the beginning of the morning and the sun was mounting up with those stars which were with him when Divine Love created those beauteous things. So that the hour of the day and the delightful season gave me good cause concerning that beast with the beautiful skin. Yet not so much but that I feared at the sight of a Lion which appeared to me, with head erect and with raging hunger he seemed coming upon me; so that the air appeared to be in fear of him. And a She-Wolf * that in her leanness appeared full of all cravings; and many has she ere now made to live in sorrow. She brought such heaviness upon me by reason

* Many commentators interpret the leopard, the lion and the she-wolf to typify respectively luxury, pride and avarice.

of the terror evoked by the sight of her, that I lost the hope of attaining the height.

COMMENT.

The passage in Dante that I most enjoy reading, occurs in the first canto where he meets the leopard, the lion and the wolf. Also impressing me most strongly is the passage which I first heard many years ago recited by my father who spoke Italian perfectly:

"Per me si va ne la città dolente, etc. Inf. III, 1.
(Through me you pass into the city of woe.)

I think that it is also extremely interesting that Dante described the Southern Cross before it had been described in any printed book. Born four hundred years before Newton who proclaimed the theory of gravitation, Dante shows some knowledge of the law of gravitation in depicting Virgil and himself climbing down Lucifer's back and then up from the center of the earth towards which all things tend.

ARTHUR BRISBANE, New York, editor New York Evening Journal and Chicago Herald and Examiner.

VIRGIL AND DANTE.

Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore;
tu se' solo colui da cu' io tolsi
lo bello stilo che m' ha fatto onore. 85-88.

Thou art my master and my author; thou art he alone from whom I took the good style that has brought me honour.

COMMENT.

As a school boy in my native land, Italy, I had to learn by heart a great deal of Dante. The foregoing lines were then most deeply impressed upon me and they have ever been present with me. Especially in my study of Bach and Verdi and while I was engaged in compositional work did I feel their power. A stimulus to be faithful to truth, if one is to hope for perfection, they remind me that Dante never surrendered to mere rhythmic exigency to make him say what he did not mean. I can offer him no higher appreciation of his influence

upon my life than by expressing my tribute of grateful obligation in the very words he addresses to Virgil:

Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore.

EDUARDO MARZO, musician, New York City, Editor of Songs of Italy, Carols of Nations, etc.

CANTO II.

TWILIGHT.

Lo giorno se n' andava, e l' aere bruno
toglieva gli animai che sono in terra
da le fatiche loro; e io sol uno
m' apparecchiava a sostener la guerra
sì del cammino e sì de la pietate,
che ritrarrà la mente che non erra. 1-6.

The day was departing and the darkening air was taking the animals that are on earth from their toils; and I alone was one preparing myself to bear up against the warfare both of the journey and the pity (for the agonies I was about to witness,—scenes—) that unerring memory shall describe.

COMMENT.

These lines impressed me with their beauty the first time I met them. As I have always loved the twilight hour, and as I grow older, these words have a symbolism that might seem sad to some but to me is not.

CHARLES A. DOWNER, PH.D., head of the Department of Romance Languages in the College of the City of New York, author of Frederic Mistral, Poet and Leader in Provence.

NOBILITY.

Qui se parrà la tua nobilitate. 9

Here will be made manifest thy nobility.

COMMENT.

That line gives strength to me, as it must surely do to others, in all life's difficulties, material or spiritual. In an

especial, attractive way, it urges to sacrifice, perseverance in personal discipline, loftiness of resolution, power of friendship, and generosity of feeling, when otherwise these might lack appeal and support.

The efficacious persuasiveness of certain lines, aphorisms and proverbs is incalculable. On this basis are prayers, taught us by the Master and His Church, graciously heard and answered by the Divinity, even if the postulant be not aware of the full value of the imploring words.

The realization that one of our very selves, as Dante was, and the knowledge that potentially we too, like our fellows, can attain to a higher mode of living, personally and socially, and use such experience with authority and right to warn and inspire others, in itself is a force for progress and success to all who have a mind to understand and a heart to follow courageously.

ENRICO PAPPACENA, editor of the International Review, I Nostri Quaderni, Lanciano (Chiati) Italy.

DANTE ADDRESSES VIRGIL.

O anima cortese mantovana
di cui la fama ancor nel mondo dura,
e durerà quanto il mondo lontana. 58-60.

O generous Mantuan Spirit whose renown still lasts throughout the world and will last as long as Time.

COMMENT.

A lover of Virgil ("tu duca, tu segnore, e tu maestro." l. 140). I never tire of repeating those lines.

WILLIAM STUART MESSER, PH.D., chairman of the Department of Latin, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H., author of Dream in Homer and Greek Tragedy.

THE BEATIFIC BEATRICE.

Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,
che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
nè fiamma d' esto incendio non m' assale. 91-93.

I am so made by God in His grace that your misery (in Limbo), does not touch me nor the flame of yonder burning (in Hell) assail me.

COMMENT.

These lines keep for me a ripened perfection, a quality that only comes when slow centuries unite with nobility of mind and heart. To read Dante recharges one with power, with faith in the durability of noble things: he is a kind of test of what remains in modern man, that is best. In the words quoted above, Dante pictures the coming of Beatrice sent by Divine Mercy. This reply seems to solve great problems of faith—to solve them so simply, so naturally, we wonder why we did not find easily this noble way. It connects us with a great age of impassioned living where the eyes of the soul had power. It comforts and uplifts me.

EDNA WORTHLEY UNDERWOOD, New York City, writer and linguist, author of Famous Stories from Foreign Countries.

BEATRICE EXPLAINS TO VIRGIL THE COMMISSION OF HER MISSION TO SAVE DANTE.

"Donna è gentil nel ciel che si compiange
di questo impedimento ov' io ti mando,
sì che duro giudicio là su frange.
Questa chiese Lucia in suo dimando
e disse: Or ha bisogno il tuo fedele
di te, ed io a te lo raccomando.
Lucia, nimica di ciascun crudele,
si mosse, e venne al loco dov' i' era,
che mi sedea con l'antica Rachele.
Disse: Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,
chè non soccorri quei che t'amò tanto,
ch' uscì per te de la volgare schiera?
non odi tu la pieta del suo pianto?
non vedi tu la morte che 'l combatte
su la fiumana ove 'l mar non ha vanto?
Al mondo non fur mai persone ratte
a far lor pro o a fuggir lor danno,
com' io, dopo cotai parole fatte,
venni qua giù del mio beato scanno,
fidandomi nel tuo parlare onesto,
ch' onora te e quei ch' udito l' hanno'.

Poscia che m'ebbe ragionato questo,
li occhi lucenti lacrimando volse;
per che mi fece del venir più presto:
e venni a te così com' ella volse;
dinanzi a quella fiera ti levai
che del bel monte il corto andar ti tolse.
Dunque che è? perchè, perchè ristai?
perchè tanta viltà nel cuore allette?
perchè ardire e franchezza non hai?
poscia che tai tre donne benedette
curan di te nella corte del cielo,
e 'l mio parlar tanto ben t'impromette?" 94-126

There is in Heaven a gracious Lady (the Blessed Virgin) who feels such compassion for this hindrance (of the three beasts) for which I send thee that she breaks the sharp judgment there on high. She, in her request, called Lucia (Illuminating Grace) and said: "Now thy faithful one (Dante) has need of thee and I commend him unto thee." Lucia, the enemy of all cruelty, arose and came to the place where I was sitting with the Rachel of ancient days and said: "Beatrice, true praise of God, why dost thou not succor him who loved thee so that for thee he left the vulgar herd? Dost thou not hear the anguish of his weeping? Dost thou not see the (spiritual) death that combats him upon the river (the stormy river of life) whereof the sea has no boast?" None on earth were ever so quick to seek their good, or flee their hurt as did I (Beatrice) after these words were spoken. And thus I came to thee from my blessed seat, trusting to thy noble speech which honours thee and those who have heard it."

(Virgil to Dante:) "After saying this to me, she turned away her bright eyes weeping, whereby she made me hasten more to come, and I came to thee as she desired; delivered thee from that savage beast which deprived thee of the short way to the beautiful mountain. What is it then? Why dost thou halt? Why dost thou harbour in thy heart such coward fear? Why art thou not bold and free when three such blessed Ladies in the court of Heaven are taking thought of thee, and my words promise thee so much good?

COMMENT.

I like these lines wherein Beatrice consents to comfort Dante and, with the aid of Virgil, to guide him through Hell and Purgatory, on to the light of God. She is the symbol here of all the earthly aid that the scholar or the artist, intent on high intellectual achievements for God, can desire. Beatrice

is Theology, Philosophy and Art. She is, also, the chosen woman providentially supporting, and sometimes enlightening, the courage and intellectual growth of this man. Here is the precious mission of an elect, beneficent and noble character of which Dante, in gratitude, knows how to sing magnificently.

Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, Loudun (Vienne) France. Correspondent of the Ministry of Public Instruction. Lauriat of the French Society of Archeology.

CANTO III.

DANTE SEES THE INSCRIPTION OVER THE GATE OF HELL.

Per me si va ne la città dolente,
per me si va ne l' etterno dolore,
per me si va tra la perduta gente.
Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore;
fécemi la divina potestate,
la somma sapienza e 'l primo amore.
Dinanzi a me non fuor cose create
se non etterne, e io etterna duro.
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate. 1-9

Through me you pass into the City of Woe:
Through me you pass into eternal pain:
Through me among the people lost for aye.
Justice the founder of my fabric moved:
To rear me was the task of power divine,
Supremest wisdom and primeval love.
Before me things create were none, save things
Eternal, and eternal I endure.
All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

COMMENT.

1—These verses are singled out because of the tremendous verities compressed in them and set forth in words that already burn. The wisdom, the power, the justice and even the love of God are proclaimed builders of Hell's fabric to endure forever.

E. L. Rivard, C.S.V., Ph.D., D.D., Jette-Saint-Pierre, Belgium, author of Views on Dante.

2—These lines inscribed on the front of the Gate of Hell, seem to me to be the most beautiful thing in the Divine Comedy by reason of the position they occupy as well as for the form in which they are expressed. What more sublime introduction could the poet give to the two travellers in the starless night! What a sublime inspiration to have thus marked out the entrance to the dark abode! In truth the image on the portal, opening at once upon creation and eternity, is most striking. The mournful and repeated harmony of the first three lines give a grandeur to the poetry, impossible to equal. And does not the last line give, in its grandeur, a presentiment of all the horror of the dreary shore to which the soul is to come when it will be stripped of everything, even of hope, the divine gift which does not leave us in life or in death? To be deprived of hope seems the most terrible chastisement reserved for eternity.

MADAME CLAUDE DE COURLANS, Paris, France, author under the pseudonym of "Madame Triquet."

3—If the work of Dante prevails as a sublime ensemble, by reason of the direct, concise and concrete character of style, thought and feeling, in which truth itself even in its full manifestation is born, nowhere is revealed, in a manner more moving, paradoxical and exact this depth, both of realism and of the supernatural, which inspired it, than in the lines inscribed on the threshold of the abyss of pain. The inscription is a résumé of the sublime metaphysics of Charity. Nothing, in fact, throws a more penetrating light on the loving designs of God, in the drama of our free destiny, than such a stroke of fire. Even in the most terrible punishments nothing is explained, yet everything is explained by "Supremest Wisdom and Primeval Love." And this flame which illuminates all the Divine Comedy, is the very one which will shine eternally in the beatific light as well as in the avenging darkness.

MAURICE BLONDEL, member of the Institute of France, professor at the University of Aix-Marseille, Aix-en-Provence, France.

4—This passage is dearest to me of all the wonderful poem, the Divine Comedy, which contains all that a Christian

must believe, love and adore. In unforgetable lines Dante paints Hell and declares it the work of Justice, of the Supremest Wisdom, of Primeval Love. Apart from the viewpoint of poetry, is it necessary to justify my preference for these lines, by the statement, often contested in our day, of the existence of Hell as a consequence of divine Justice and, even better, of God's love? Dante develops the truth here in words of finality. The passage, so often admired and quoted, remains one of the most extraordinary since everything in it is developed from the fundamental proposition, God Himself, and so is demonstrated, from consequence to consequence, the existence of Hell as the effect of His Love, Justice and Wisdom.

The work of Dante is beautiful throughout, but nowhere else does it assume this affirmative tone of a profession of faith supported by logic itself.

Emile Bernard, Paris, France.

DIVINE JUSTICE.

COMMENT.

1—The reason for my choice at the moment of the line: "Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore," is that at the present moment I am trying to cling to a matter of faith. I have suffered a sore bereavement in these past two months and the experience is one which shatters all that seems stable and permanent. When one is in such a state of mind one clings desperately to the last solid thing remaining, a belief in divine justice.

Henry R. Brush, Ph.D., professor of Romance Languages in the University of California, Los Angeles.

2—"Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore." Here in six words the poet has shown that the città dolente itself is based upon the eternal justice of God, and he has thereby implied the freedom of the human will. In these same words he has compressed the doctrine that eternal punishment comes only from

the choice of the sinner who willfully deprives himself of the love of God and thereby not only brings upon himself damnation but the chief punishment inherent in damnation.

HARVEY WICKHAM, journalist and novelist, Rome, Italy.

3—The hackneyed line: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here" is my favourite not because of its painful character, but because it brings before the reader very succinctly the final and everlasting verity of Right and Wrong.

MACKENZIE BELL, London, England.

4—Lines 5 and 6:

> Facemi la divina potestate
> la summa sapienza e 'l primo amore,

constitute a theological synthesis of incomparable profoundness which, under a paradoxical form, solves marvelously the apparent contradiction of infinite Justice and infinite Mercy. The synthesis, moreover, places in bold relief, while ever safeguarding the liberty of angel and man, the invincible force of divine Love and its supreme triumph.

GUSTAVE BONTOUX, professor of Sacred Scripture, titular Canon of the Cathedral and director of the Grand Seminary. Sap (Hautes-Alpes), France.

5—One does not know what to admire most in Dante—the vigor of his images, the exquisiteness of his poetry or his great learning in theology, philosophy, mythology, history, astronomy, medicine, languages, etc. Dante was an erudite layman who was not an exception in his time, for it was the wonderful thirteenth century which gave him birth.

In the verses quoted above he opens to our gaze the sinister portals on the threshold of which one must "abandon all hope." Far worse pain is that than the pain (in time of misery) of recalling the days of happiness. Inf. V, 121.

PRINCESS MARGUERITE DE LA TOUR, du Pin Chambly de la Charce, Paris, France.

VIRGIL ENCOURAGES DANTE TO ADVENTURE FEARLESSLY THE HEREAFTER.

"Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto;
ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta." 14-15.

"Here must all distrust be left; all cowardice must be dead."

COMMENT.

At the threshold of all human enterprise, whether great or small, one cannot do better than remember these words and strive to pursue their meaning.

WALTER LITTLEFIELD, journalist and critic, New York City.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO WERE EQUALLY INDIFFERENT TO GOOD AND EVIL.

Quivi sospiri, pianti e alti guai
risonavan per l' aere sanza stelle,
per ch' io al cominciar ne lagrimai.
Diverse lingue, orribili favelle,
parole di dolore, accenti d' ira,
voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle
facevano un tumulto, il qual s' aggira
sempre in quell' aura sanza tempo tinta,
come la rena quando turbo spira.
E io ch' avea d' error la testa cinta,
dissi: "Maestro, che è quel ch' i' odo?
e che gent' è che par nel duol sì vinta?"
Ed elli a me: "Questo misero modo
tengon l' anime triste di coloro
che visser sanza infamia e sanza lodo.
Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro
de li angeli che non furon ribelli
nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per sè fuoro.
Caccianli i ciel per non esser men belli,
nè lo profondo inferno li riceve,
ch' alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d' elli."
E io: "Maestro, che è tanto greve
a lor che lamentar li fa sì forte?"
Rispuose: "Dicerolti molto breve.

Questi non hanno speranza di morte,
e la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa,
che 'nvidiosi son d' ogni altra sorte.
Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa;
misericordia e giustizia li sdegna:
non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa."
E io, che riguardai, vidi una insegna
che girando correva tanto ratta,
che d' ogni posa mi parea indegna;
e dietro le venia sì lunga tratta
di gente, ch' io non averei creduto
che morte tanta n' avesse disfatta.
Poscia ch' io v' ebbi alcun riconosciuto,
vidi e conobbi l' ombra di colui
che fece per viltà il gran rifiuto
Incontanente intesi e certo fui
che questa era la setta de' cattivi,
a Dio spiacenti ed a' nemici sui.
Questi sciaurati, che mai non fur vivi,
erano ignudi, stimolati molto
da mosconi e da vespe ch' eran ivi.
Elle rigavan lor di sangue il volto,
che, mischiato di lagrime, ai lor piedi
da fastidiosi vermi era ricolto. 22-69

Here sighs, laments and deep wailings were resounding through the starless air, whereat at first I wept. Strange tongues, horrible utterances, words of woe, accents of anger, voices high and hoarse and with them sounds of hands (i.e. of spirits beating their breast in agony) were making a tumult that is forever whirling on in that air eternally dark, like sand in a whirlwind.

And I with my head hooded with horror said: "Master what is this that I hear and what people is this who seem so overcome with woe?"

And he to me: "This miserable condition the wretched souls of those maintain who lived without blame and without praise. Mingled are they with that caitiff choir of the angels who were not rebels nor were faithful to God, but were for themselves. Heaven drove them forth that its beauty should not be impaired nor doth the depth of Hell receive them, because the damned would have some glory over them."

And I: "Master, what is so grievous to them, that makes them lament so bitterly?"

He answered: "I will tell thee very briefly. They have no hope of death (of annihilation to end their punishment) and their blind life

is so debased that they are envious of every other lot. Fame of them the world permits not to prevail. Mercy and Justice disdain them: let us not speak of them; but look thou and pass."

And I, who was gazing, perceived a banner, which whirling about ran so quickly that it seemed disdainful of all pause, and behind it came so long a train of people that I should never have believed death had undone so many. After I had distinguished some among them, I saw and knew the shade of him who from cowardice had made the great refusal.*

At once I understood and was certain that this was the company of those caitiffs displeasing alike to God and to His enemies. These wretches, who never were alive (really), were naked and sorely stung by gadflies and by wasps that were there. These made their faces stream with blood which, mingled with tears, was harvested at their feet by loathsome worms.

NEUTRAL CHARACTERS.

COMMENT.

1—The Dantean line I ever find myself quoting is: "The wretched souls of those who lived without blame and without praise."

AGNES REPPLIER, LITT.D., Philadelphia, Pa., essayist, author of The Fireside Sphinx, In Our Convent Days.

2—"The wretched souls of those who lived without blame and without praise."

This passage is a clear description of the hopeless condition of those who have made no effort in life. In a way, even "blame" is an evidence of achievement.

FRANK PIERREPONT GRAVES, Litt.D., president of the University of the State of New York. Commissioner of Edu-

* The allusion is uncertain. Some commentators think the reference is to Esau who made the great renunciation of his birthright. Others apply the text to Diocletian who abdicated his throne in his old age. Still others hold that Dante means Celestine V who resigned the Papacy,—an act without precedent. Scartazzini and many other commentators claim that the act was brought about through the machinations of Cardinal Cajetani who later became Pope under the name of Boniface VIII, Dante's political enemy. A contrary view is expressed by Tito Bottagisio in *Bonifacio VIII e un celebre Commentatore di Dante.* (Scuola Tipografica Salesiana, Milano, 1926.)

cation, Albany, New York. Author of A History of Education During the Middle Ages.

3—The passage in which Dante flays those who make no use of their lives, contributed to inspiring me with the main theme of my novel La Peur de Vivre, in which I showed the baseness of those who lived without blame and without praise.

Henry Bordeaux, member of the French Academy, Coguin, Savoie, France.

4—The line most often in my thoughts is: "Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa." "Let us not speak of them, but do thou look and pass." It frequently occurs to me when I am present at useless and trivial discussion (which, as often, is an unwarranted extension of its original use).

Charles Upson Clark, Ph.D., North Hatley, Quebec, Canada, author of Greater Roumania.

5—To list the virtues and the vices in a graduated scale and to assign them perfectly measured rewards and punishments seems to do violence to our sense of justice. And yet, in placing in the antechamber of Hell the souls without virtues and likewise without vices, who were condemned by both Mercy and Justice, Dante reminds the Christian that it does not alone suffice to be free from vices, but that, in this life, perfection implies continued growth in virtue, and that he sins mortally against Charity who is minus virtues, however free he be from vices. How greatly do they deceive themselves who consider that they are certain of salvation because, as they say, they have injured no one! What wells of egotism such hearts disclose!

Marie-Felix-Andre-Louis Maurer, Columbes, Seine, France. Former Librarian to the Prince of Moscow. Author of numerous works on military history v.g., The Strasbourg Expedition in September, 1861.

6—I never weary of admiring in this vision of Dante the vigorous expression of his sublime scorn for those persons incapable of submitting and giving themselves to integral truth, "the supreme good of the understanding." Living without blame and without praise they prefer, in the unbelievable

disorder of their intellect, the equivocal breath of mind to the necessary height of view. More through cowardice of character than through lack of understanding they substitute expedients for principles. They wish to conciliate, at any cost, truth and error, good and evil, God and Satan. They attempt to keep within an exact middle course. They succeed only in "displeasing God and His enemies." Like his guide, the poet despises them justly: "Let us not speak of them but do thou look and pass."

A. Roussel, Ph.D., Ille-et-Vilaine, France, professor at the Grand Seminary of Rennes, author of Liberalism and Catholicism.

7—I am a mild person, little in love with stern judgments or harsh punishments, but I have my moments when I think I should like to do something with the "frustrate ghosts" that Browning speaks about, the followers of them whom Dante found in the Vestibule of Hell, because they "lived without blame and without praise" (and) "were for themselves" (alone). I have a relish for a good, lusty rogue. I dare say everyone has, but of those who are not rebels yet are not faithful to God it is hard to be tolerant.

Clara E. Laughlin, Chicago, Ill., author of So You Are Going to Italy.

8—The passage which has always appealed to me most among the many weighty and beautiful ones of the Divine Comedy is the one in which Dante condemns the morally and politically lukewarm—those who are neither good nor bad, but stand for themselves apart. The rectitude and positiveness of Dante's moral sense and the courage to act in accord with his conviction, are the qualities which have made him one of the great moral forces of mankind, and are needed in our day as much as ever.

Henry R. Lang, Ph.D., professor in Yale University, New Haven, Conn., author of The Descort in Old Portuguese and Spanish.

9—My favorite Dante Quotation is the passage from the Third Canto just inside the gate of hell where Dante meets

the people who *had never done any evil but had never done any good.* They are howling over their wasted opportunities and Dante says that there are so many of them that you would not believe so many people had ever died. It seems there was some hesitancy as to what should be done with them. It was decided to place them with the neutral angels "who were neither rebels nor were faithful to God but were for themselves." An American humorist has put it: "They believed in doing things for the benefit of the greater number but considered the greater number to be number one." When the conflict was over the powers above did not care to have them longer in heaven and yet if they were sent down into the depths of hell the demons would laugh at them or as Dante says, "have some glory of them," and there was to be no laughing or boasting in hell.

Their loud outcry is due to the fact that they have no hope of death and their life is so miserable that they are envious of everyone else. Their only punishment is to be stung by gadflies and wasps and the blood from these stings, mixed with their useless tears, flows down to their feet to be licked up by worms who crawl around them.

This is such a striking instance of making the punishment fit the crime and of properly locating those who seem to think that because they do no evil they must be rewarded as if they had done good, that it makes a marvelously effective introduction to Dante's Inferno.

James J. Walsh, M.D., Sc.D.,Litt.D., New York City, author of The Thirteenth the Greatest of Centuries.

CHARON, THE GRIM FERRYMAN OF HELL, REFUSES PASSAGE TO DANTE.

Virgil answers:

"Caron, non ti crucciare:
vuolsi così colà dove si puote
ciò che si vuole, e più non dimandare." 94-96.

"Charon, vex not thyself; thus it is willed where Will and Power are One; and enquire thou no further,"

COMMENT.

1—I dearly love these lines because they reveal to us the perfect comprehension that Dante had of the omnipotence of God and of the Divine Will which no other will, mighty though it be, can ever resist.

EDUARDO SODERINI, Senator of the Kingdom, Rome, Italy.

2—These lines indicate that it is the Divine Will which permitted Dante to enter the realm of the dead, Inferno, and they suggest the just and all-seeing Power which not only opened all doors, but governs everybody and everything. The words are a sort of a ritual or formula that Virgil repeated on each occasion when Dante was threatened by the fiends who obstructed his ingress. In a word, Dante's lines picture the government and sovereignty of God and His omnipotence. Some have been heard to say that Dante had in mind a theocracy.

JOHN J. FRESCHI, New York City, judge of the Municipal Court.

THE SOULS OF THE DAMNED ARE FERRIED BY CHARON OVER THE RIVER ACHERON.

Caron dimonio, con occhi di bragia,
loro accennando, tutti li raccoglie;
batte col remo qualunque s' adagia.
Come d'autunno si levan le foglie
l'una appresso de l' altra, fin che 'l ramo
vede a la terra tutte le sue spoglie,
similemente il mal seme d' Adamo:
gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una
per cenni, come augel per suo richiamo.
Così sen vanno su per l' onda bruna,
e avanti che sien di là discese,
anche di qua nuova schiera s' auna.
"Figliuol mio," disse il maestro cortese,
"quelli che muoion ne l' ira di Dio
tutti convegnon qui d' ogni paese;
e pronti sono a trapassar lo rio,
chè la divina giustizia li sprona,
sì che la tema si volve in disio.

Quinci non passa mai anima buona;
e però, se Caron di te si lagna,
ben puoi sapere omai che 'l suo dir suona." 109-129.

The demon Charon with eyes of glowing coal, beckoning them on, collects them all; with his oar he smites whoever lags. As in the autumn the leaves fall off one after the other, till the branch sees all its spoils upon the ground; in likewise the evil seed of Adam cast themselves from that shore, one by one, at signals, like the falcon at its call. Thus they depart over the murky water, and before they have landed on the farther side, again is a fresh company collected on this.

"My son," said the courteous Master, "those who die under God's wrath, all meet together here from every land. And they are eager to cross the river, because Divine Justice so spurns them on that their very fear is turned into desire. This way the soul of no elect ever passes; and hence if Charon complains of thee, thou easily now mayest know the import of his words.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST

"When Dante describes the spirits falling from the bank of Acheron, 'as dead leaves flutter from a bough' he gives the most perfect image possible of their utter lightness, feebleness, passiveness, and scattering agony of despair, without however, for an instant losing his own clear perception that *these* are souls, and *those* are leaves; he makes no confusion of one with the other." Ruskin, *Modern Painters,* 1st Am. ed. III, 160.

CANTO IV.

LIMBO, THE ABODE OF BLAMELESS SOULS WHO HAD LIVED BEFORE CHRIST'S COMING, OR, IF AFTER, HAD DIED WITHOUT BAPTISM.

Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,
non avea pianto mai che di sospiri
che l' aura etterna facevan tremare.
Ciò avvenia di duol sanza martiri
ch' avean le turbe, ch' eran molto grandi,
d' infanti e di femmine e di viri.
Lo buon maestro a me: "Tu non dimandi
che spiriti son questi che tu vedi?
Or vo' che sappi, innanzi che più andi,

ch' ei non peccaro; e s' elli hanno mercedi,
non basta, perchè non ebber battesmo,
ch' è porta de la fede che tu credi.
E se furon dinanzi al cristianesmo,
non adorar debitamente a Dio:
e di questi cotai son io medesmo.
Per tai difetti, non per altro rio,
semo perduti, e sol di tanto offesi,
che sanza speme vivemo in disio."
Gran duol mi prese al cor quando lo 'ntesi,
però che gente di molto valore
conobbi che 'n quel limbo eran sospesi. 25-45.

Here, so far as could be heard, there was no plaint except of sighs, which caused the eternal air to tremble. This came from the grief without torments felt by the crowds that were many and great, of infants, of women, and of men. The good Master to me. "Thou dost not ask what spirits are these thou seest? Now I would have thee know, before thou goest farther, that they sinned not; and if they have merit, it suffices not, for they had not Baptism which is the portal of the faith that thou believest. And if they lived before Christianity, they did not duly worship God: and of such as these am I myself. For such defects and for no other guilt are we lost and only so far afflicted, that without hope we live in desire." Great sadness seized me at the heart when I heard this because I knew that people of much worth were suspended in that Limbo.

GREETING OF VIRGIL BY HIS FELLOW POETS.

Intanto voce fu per me udita:
"Onorate l' altissimo poeta:
l' ombra sua torna, ch' era dipartita".
Poi che la voce fu restata e queta,
vidi quattro grand' ombre a noi venire:
sembianza avean nè trista nè lieta.
Lo buon maestro cominciò a dire:
"Mira colui con quella spada in mano,
che vien dinanzi ai tre sì come sire.
Quelli è Omero poeta sovrano;
l' altro è Orazio satiro che vene;
Ovidio è il terzo, e l' ultimo Lucano." 79-90.

Da ch' ebber ragionato insieme alquanto,
volsersi a me con salutevol cenno;
e 'l mio maestro sorrise di tanto.

E più d' onore ancor assai mi fenno,
ch' ei sì mi fecer de la loro schiera,
sì ch' io fui sesto tra cotanto senno. 97-102.

Meanwhile a voice was heard by me: "Honour the loftiest Poet. His shade returns that was departed". When the voice ceased and became silent I beheld four mighty shades advancing towards us: they had an aspect neither sad nor joyful. The good Master began to speak. "Mark him with that sword in hand who comes before the three even as their lord. That is Homer, the sovereign poet; the next who comes is Horace the satirist: Ovid is the third and the last is Lucan..... After they conversed a while together they turned to me with a sign of salutation; and my Master smiled thereat. And far greater honour yet did they pay me, for they made me of their band, so that I was the sixth amid so much genius.

THE CASTLE OF ILLUSTRIOUS HEATHEN.

Giugnemmo al piè d' un nobile castello,
sette volte cerchiato d' alte mura,
difeso intorno d' un bel fiumicello.
Questo passammo come terra dura;
per sette porte intrai con questi savi:
venimmo in prato di fresca verdura.
Genti v' eran con occhi tardi e gravi,
di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti:
parlavan rado, con voci soavi. 106-114.

We came to the foot of a noble castle, seven times circled by high walls, defended round about by a fair rivulet. This we passed as if hard ground; through seven gates I entered with those sages; we reached a meadow of fresh verdure. On it were people with eyes slow and grave, having the appearance of great authority: seldom spoke they and then only with soft voices.

COMMENT.

This canto illustrates, in my opinion, the attitude of the Catholic Church towards human reason. The homage which Dante renders to the illustrious senate of sages, heroes and poets of Greece and Rome is an expression of the testimony of the Church with regard to the divine element within us—reason. But the place itself to which Dante assigns these personages, brings out still more clearly the inestimable merit

of grace. He recalls to those who might be tempted to forget the truth, that there are two worlds, one before Christ, one after Christ—that we belong to the second and that all our thoughts must be renewed and devoted by the consideration of this inexpressible benefit of having been born in the time of grace.

AMEDIE D'YVIGNAC, former editor of La Gazette Française, Paris, France.

HEAVEN REWARDS MERIT.

"L'onrata nominanza
che di lor suona su ne la tua vita,
grazia acquista nel ciel che sì li avanza." 76-78.

The honoured renown of them that echoes in this world gains in Heaven that favour which thus advances them."

COMMENT.

My preference for this passage is determined by this consideration: the aim of human life must be service in this life in behalf of others, and that course of virtue will be rewarded in the future life.

ENRICO CATELLANI, Senator of The Kingdom, Padua, Italy.

VIRGIL.

L'ombra sua torna ch' era dispartita. 81.

His shade returns that was departed.

COMMENT.

That verse conveys to my mind all that Dante stands for. We Italians quote Dante almost every day, mostly unconscious of our so doing. Even the layman, who has never read Dante, frequently utters some of his divine lines.

VINCENZO CAMPORA, PH.D., New York City, editor of Columbus.

THE DIGNIFIED SAGES.

Genti v' eran con occhi tardi e gravi,
di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti:
parlavan rado, con voci soavi. 112-114.

On it were people with eyes slow and grave, having the appearance of great authority: seldom spoke they and then only with soft voices.

COMMENT.

1—Nothing more beautiful or more vigorous, exhibiting the inherent pride of poets, has ever been said than the thoughts expressed in this canto.

PAUL VALÉRY, member of the French Academy, Paris, France.

2—Again and again this passage recurs to my mind, singularly striking in these days of noisy, shrill-voiced self-advertisement. Skillful in its conciseness and its suggestion, this characterization of the ancient worthies, heroes, scholars, philosophers, with their quiet confidence and strength, their modesty and well modulated voices, offers an ideal to be sought after—a contrast to the present-day charlatan-officer, cleric, teacher or scientist.

ARTHUR B. MYRICK, PH.D., professor of Romance Languages in the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt., translator of Short Stories from French and Spanish.

CANTO V.

THE ABODE OF THE LASCIVIOUS.

SEMIRAMIS, QUEEN OF ASSYRIA, A WOMAN OF THE GROSSEST AND MOST UNBRIDLED DEPRAVITY.

"La prima di color di cui novelle
tu vuo' saper" mi disse quelli allotta,
"fu imperadrice di molte favelle.
A vizio di lussuria fu sì rotta,
che libito fe' licito in sua legge
per torre il biasmo in che era condotta." 52-57.

"The first one of these of whom thou wishest to have knowledge," he then replied, "was empress of many tongues. In the vice of sensuality she was so unbridled that lust she made licit in her law, to take away the blame she had incurred."

COMMENT.

The reference is to Semiramis who married her king Nisus, after having been the wife of a general of the king. She herself suffered death at the hands of her own son, Nisus II.

I like this passage because, contrary to the ephemeral things of this world, which change with the mode, this thought remains true for all times. After six hundred years it still symbolizes the principle which rules the politics of the people, from the savage Bolshevist to the most refined government of our civilization.

General De Poilloue, Marquis de Saint-Maris, Paris, France.

THE PATHETIC STORY OF FRANCESCA DI RIMINI.

"O animal grazioso e benigno
che visitando vai per l' aere perso
noi che tignemmo il mondo di sanguigno,
se fosse amico il re de l' universo,
noi pregheremmo lui de la tua pace,
poi c' hai pietà del nostro mal perverso.
Di quel che udire e che parlar vi piace,
noi udiremo e parleremo a vui,
mentre che 'l vento, come fa, ci tace.
Siede la terra dove nata fui
su la marina dove 'l Po discende
per aver pace co' seguaci sui.
Amor, ch' al cor gentil ratto s' apprende,
prese costui de la bella persona
che mi fu tolta: e 'l modo ancor m' offende.
Amor, ch' a nullo amato amar perdona,
mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,
che, come vedi, ancor non m' abbandona.
Amor condusse noi ad una morte:
Caina attende chi a vita ci spense."
Queste parole da lor ci fur porte.
Quand' io intesi quell' anime offense,
chinai 'l viso, e tanto il tenni basso,
fin che 'l poeta mi disse: "Che pense?"
Quando rispuosi, cominciai: "Oh lasso,
quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio
menò costoro al doloroso passo!"

Poi mi rivolsi a loro e parla' io,
e cominciai: "Francesca, i tuoi martiri
a lacrimar mi fanno tristo e pio.
Ma dimmi: al tempo de' dolci sospiri,
a che e come concedette amore
che conosceste i dubbiosi desiri?"
E quella a me: "Nessun maggior dolore
che ricordarsi del tempo felice
ne la miseria: e ciò sa 'l tuo dottore.
Ma s' a conoscer la prima radice
del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto,
dirò come colui che piange e dice.
Noi leggiavamo un giorno per diletto
di Lancialotto come amor lo strinse:
soli eravamo e sanza alcun sospetto.
Per più fiate li occhi ci sospinse
quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso;
ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.
Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
esser baciato da cotanto amante,
questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
la bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.
Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse:
quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante."
Mentre che l' uno spirto questo disse,
l' altro piangea sì, che di pietade
io venni men così com' io morisse;
e caddi come corpo morto cade. 88-142.

"O living being, gracious and benign, who goest through this murky air, visiting us who stained the world with our blood—if the King of the Universe were our friend, we would pray Him for thy peace, since thou hast pity on our perverse misfortune. Of what it pleases thee (Dante) to hear and speak, (that) we will hear and speak to (both of) you, while the wind, as now, is hushed for us. The city wherein I was born sits on the seashore where the Po with its attendant streams, descends to find rest. Love which quickly captivates the gentle heart, seized this man (Paolo) by means of the lovely form of which I was bereft, and the manner (thereof) still offends me. Love which absolves no loved one from loving in return, took me so strongly with delight in him that, as thou seest, it does not even now abandon me. Love led us on to one death. Caïna awaits him who quenched our life."

These words were borne from them to us. Soon as I heard these afflicted souls I bowed my head, and held it low until the Poet said to

me: "What art thou thinking?" When I answered, I began "Alas! how many tender thoughts, how great desire, led them to this woeful pass!" Then I turned to them again and began thus to speak: "Francesca, thy torments make me sad and full of pity even unto tears. But tell me: at the time of your sweet sighings, by what sign and in what manner did love concede to you to know your unconfessed desires?"

And she to me. "In time of misery there is no greater pain than to recall the hours of happiness, and this thy teacher knows. But if to know the first root of our love, I will do like one who weeps and tells. One day for pastime we were reading of Lancelot, how love constrained him: we were alone and without any suspicion. Many a time did that reading cause our eyes to meet and our faces to change colour. But one passage alone overpowered us. When we read how the smiling lips (of Queen Guinevere) were kissed by such a lover (Lancelot) this one who never from me shall be parted, kissed my mouth all trembling. The book and he who wrote it were both a Gallehaut (an intermediary) between us. That day we read no further in it." While one spirit said this the other was weeping, so that from sympathy, I swooned as though I had been dying, and fell even as a dead body falls.

COMMENT.

1—The episode of Francesca haunts me with its terse and poignant pathos.

Emma Gurney-Salter, L.H.D., London, England, author of Nature Painting in the Divine Comedy.

2—Without the dramatic story of Paolo and Francesca and other historic tales of the Divine Comedy modern literature would be the poorer.

Aurelia Henry Reinhardt, Ph.D., Litt.D., President of Mills College, California. Editor (with translation and notes) of The Monarchia of Dante.

3—From the standpoint of pure art, if art be really and above everything else, a matter of sentiment, I prefer this episode of Francesca di Rimini.

Eugene Delcourt-Haillot, President of the French Confederation of Commercial, Industrial and Liberal Professions. Paris, France.

4—In the works of Dante, the episode of Francesca di Rimini is one of the most beautiful pages. It is, perhaps, the

episode most generally known and admired, at once most touching and simple and true, of a truth that is for all times and all countries.

PAUL MONCEUX, Antony, France, member of the Institute (Academy of Inscriptions and Literature), Professor in the College of France.

5—The passage which has stirred in me, I think, deeper emotion than any other is the episode of Francesca. Many years have passed since it was my privilege to study Dante under the tuition of Doctor Scartazzini in the little village of Soglio in the Val Bregaga, and the spell which the Divina Commedia then cast upon me has never wholly faded from my life.

J. E. C. WELLDON, D.D., Dean of the Cathedral of Durham, England.

RAVENNA.

Siede la terra dove nata fui
Su la marina dove 'l Po discende
per aver pace co' seguaci sui. 97-99.

The city wherein I was born, sits on the seashore where the Po with its attendant streams, descends to find rest.

COMMENT.

As a citizen of Ravenna, no Dantean tercet is dearer to me than that employed by Francesca to describe, in words divinely, musical and picturesque, its situation. The city for all time must be signalized as *her* city.

CLETO CALVELLI, Podestà of Ravenna, Italy.

LOVE.

Amor ch' al cor gentile ratto s'apprende,
prese costui de la bella persona
che mi fu tolta; e 'l modo ancor m' offende. 100-102.

Love which quickly captivates the gentle heart, seized this man by means of the lovely form of which I was bereft, and the manner (thereof) still offends me.

This quotation, like many passages of Scripture, may be applied to very many and varied occasions and always have a certain relevancy. It is "'l modo ancor m' offende," or a slight variation upon it, that it so happens, in point of fact, I have most frequently quoted, the idea underlying being generally, that it really makes no particular difference as regards the deed itself for which one is responsible, but what makes the impression is the way in which the deed is done. Naturally this may be applied to all manner of gifts, actions and conduct in regard to which, in themselves, one may not take exception, but in regard to the manner of giving the gift, the way in which a certain action is brought about, and one's course of conducting one's self, one may have good reason to take offense.

JAMES GEDDES, Jr., Ph.D., Brookline, Mass., Professor in the Boston University. Author of Canadian French, the Language and Literature.

BEATRICE.

La bella persona che mi fu tolta, 101.

The lovely form of which I was bereft.

COMMENT.

The foregoing line is considered, I believe, the sweetest line in the world.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT, New York City. Founder and Editor, American Section of The Poetry Review. Author of Life's Recessional.

LOVE.

Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona. 103.

Love which absolves no loved one from loving in return.

COMMENT.

1—Those words are, I think, entitled to contest with Virgil's "Tendebantque manus ripae ulterioris amore," the claim of constituting the most concentrated single line in poetry.

Sir Rennell Rodd, London, England, former British Ambassador to Italy.

2—The foregoing passage is my favourite quotation from Dante. He states the omnipotence of Love—its power to transform everything to its own essence, just as fire does; it confirms me in the belief that Love is all in all and finally, it draws me nearer to St. Paul's perception of Charity (I Corinthians XIII) which is the equivalent of Love.

Luigi Barzini, New York City, Editor of Corriere D'America.

LOVE.

Quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio
menò costoro al doloroso passo! 113-114.

How many tender thoughts, how great desire led them to this woeful pass!

COMMENT.

1—That passage frequently comes into my thoughts.

Henry Osborn Taylor, Litt.D., New York City, Author of The Medieval Mind.

2—This passage expresses a profound and tragic truth, expressed by Shakespeare in a different way and connexion:

"The gods are just and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us."
King Lear, Act V, sc. III. vv. 172-3.

Herbert Warren, Magdalen College, Oxford, England.

MISERY AND HAPPINESS.

Nessun maggior dolore
che ricordasi del tempo felice
ne la miseria. 121-122.

In time of misery there is no greater pain than to recall the hours of happiness.

COMMENT.

1—Most sad, but how true!

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, London, England.

2—These lines epitomize what is, perhaps, the most notable canto in the entire Divine Comedy. They express the anguish of the exiled poet, and the sorrows of the whole human race.

Olive H. Moore, Ph.D., Columbus, Ohio, Professor, Romance Languages, Ohio State University, Author of Literature and Tradition.

3—This passage is echoed in Tennyson's *Locksley Hall:*

"This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow
Is remembering happier things."

The thought probably finds its origin in the words of Boëthius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae,* Book II, Pros. IV:

"In omni adversitate fortunae, infelicissimum est genus infortunii fuisse felicem."

Chaucer expresses the idea in *Troilus and Creseide* (Book III, 1624), as follows:

"For of fortune's sharpe adversite
The worst kind of infortune is this,
A man to have been in prosperite
And it remember, when it passed is.

Hugh A. O'Donnell, Assistant Business Manager of the New York Times, President of The Guild of Catholic Writers, New York City.

THE FINEST ELLIPSIS IN THE WORLD'S LITERATURE.

Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante. 138.

That day we read no further in it.

COMMENT.

1—There are, of course, finer, more deeply splendid sentences but spiritually none of more pregnant significance.

Margaret Anglin, Actress, New York City.

2—I know nothing in the world's poetry to surpass that passage for simplicity, pathos and sheer expressional beauty.

Richard Burton, Ph.D., Englewood, N. J., Associate Editor of Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature.

3—Taken with the context, the story of the sin of Paolo and Francesca is told in that line with exquisite reticence. It is a tragedy in a nutshell.

Francesca M. Stelle ("Darley Dale"), T.O.S.D., Stroud Glos., England.

4—This quotation lacks intrinsic value. But its beauty and effectiveness will, I think, appeal to everyone who reads it just where it stands in that famous and highly pathetic story of Paolo and Francesca. In point of appropriateness it seems rarely surpassed by any other and well-known saying of the poet.

Heizaboro Yamakawa, Tohokugaknin, Sendai, Japan. First translator of the Inferno into Japanese.

5—The episode of Francesca di Rimini moves me profoundly not only for the charm and harmony that it expresses, but also for the reserve and delicacy it displays, in a theme so singularly difficult to treat.

Henry G. Dottin, University Professor, Rennes, France.

CANTO VI.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE GLUTTONOUS AND A DESCRIPTION OF CERBERUS, THEIR GUARDIAN AND TORMENTOR.

Io sono al terzo cerchio, de la piova
  etterna, maladetta, fredda e greve:
  regola e qualità mai non l' è nova.
Grandine grossa, acqua tinta e neve
  per l' aere tenebroso si riversa;
  pute la terra che questo riceve.
Cerbero, fiera crudele e diversa,
  con tre gole caninamente latra
  sopra la gente che quivi è sommersa.

Li occhi ha vermigli, la barba unta e atra,
e 'l ventre largo, e unghiate le mani;
graffia li spiriti, scuoia e disquatra.
Urlar li fa la pioggia come cani:
de l' un de' lati fanno a l' altro schermo;
volgonsi spesso i miseri profani. 7-21.

I am in the third circle, that of the eternal rain, accursed, cold and heavy. Its rule and quality are never new. Great hailstones, icy water and snow pour down through the murky air; stinking is the earth on which they fall. Cerberus, a beast cruel and monstrous, with three throats barks dog-like at those who are submerged there. His eyes are red, his beard black and greasy, his belly big and his hands are armed with claws; he clutches the spirits, flays and rends them. The rain makes them howl like dogs; with one of their sides they make a screen for the other; the polluted wretches often turn themselves.

COMMENT.

In my opinion two of the strongest passages in the Divine Comedy are the sixth canto, Inferno, in which the great artist portrays the fate of gluttons, and the ninth canto, Inferno, where he writes of materialists and heretics. Nobody who merely reads the surface of the lines ever gets the extraordinary beauty of either the one canto or the other. The poetic justice and the mystical interpretation are the things that make these cantos wonderful.

JOHN CAVANAUGH, D.D., LL.D., Professor of English, University of Notre Dame, Ind., Author of Priests of Holy Cross.

Tutto che questa gente maladetta
in vera perfezion già mai non vada. 109-110.

These accursed people can never attain to true perfection.

COMMENT.

That passage seems to me to possess unusual excellence. It is an aphoristic statement of profound truth.

JOHN J. TIGERT, LL.D., Commissioner of Education, Washington, D. C. Author of The Philosophy of the World War.

CANTO VII.

PLUTUS, GUARDIAN OF THE CIRCLE OF THE AVARICIOUS AND THE PRODIGALS, ATTEMPTS TO PREVENT THE ENTRANCE OF THE TWO POETS.

"Papè Satàn, papè Satàn aleppe!"
cominciò Pluto con la voce chioccia;
e quel savio gentil, che tutto seppe,
disse per confortarmi: "Non ti noccia
la tua paura; chè, poder, ch' elli abbia,
non ci torrà lo scender questa roccia."
Poi si rivolse a quella infiata labbia,
e disse: "Taci, maladetto lupo:
consuma dentro te con la tua rabbia.
Non è sanza cagion l' andare al cupo:
vuolsi ne l' alto là dove Michele
fè la vendetta del superbo strupo."
Quali dal vento le gonfiate vele
caggiono avvolte, poi che l' alber fiacca,
tal cadde a terra la fiera crudele. 1-15.

"Pape Satan, pape Satan aleppe," Plutus began with his clucking voice. And that gentle Sage who knew everything said to comfort me: "Let not thy fear trouble thee, for be his power what it may, yet shall he not hinder thee from descending this rock." Then he turned to that countenance bloated (with rage), and said: "Be silent, accursed wolf! inwardly consume thyself with thine own rage: not without cause is this descent into the Abyss; it is willed on high, there where Michael did vengeance on the proud adultery." As the sails, swollen by the wind, fall in a heap when the mast breaks, so fell to earth the cruel beast.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"The Plutus of Dante, who (to show the influence of riches in destroying the reason) is the only one of the powers of the Inferno who cannot speak intelligibly; and also the cowardliest; he is not merely quelled or restrained, but literally "collapses" at a word; the sudden and helpless operation of mercantile panic being all told in the brief metaphor, "as the sails, swollen with the wind, fall, when the mast breaks." Ruskin, *"Unto This Last,"* Essay IV, 1st Am. ed., p. 120.

THE INEQUALITY OF RACES.

Per ch' una gente impera ed altra langue,
seguendo lo giudicio di costei,
che è occulto come in erba l' angue. 82-84.

Wherefore one race rules and the other languishes, obeying her (Fortune's) decree, which is occult as the snake in the grass.

COMMENT.

1—I cherish that tercet most, and repeat it very often. It expresses, in my opinion, the synthesis of universal history.

ACHILLE LORIA, Senator of the Kingdom, Turin, Italy.

2—Perhaps no verse in the Divine Comedy contains with such simplicity of expression a more profound law of life. "Languire" and "imperare" are, in fact, the terms of antithesis, and, at the same time, of identity in which is enclosed the whole existence of man in relation to his fellowman. Both are governed by a necessity which transcends "the resistance of human wit." It is a law ideal and universally potent causing an interchange of "vain possessions between race and race, and one blood and another." So it fosters in us the divine virtue of labor. The law operates for individuals as well as for nations.

All the history of Rome and of Italy, interwoven with glory and sorrow and illuminated by tragic flashes of fire and by the light of art, is there in that law, to testify, like no other in the world, that the right to rule is the painful conquest of the spirit.

UMBERTO BISCOTTINI, Ph.D., Pisa, Italy, University Professor and Editor of *Il Giornale di Politica e di Letteratura.*

SWEET SUNNY AIR.

Ne l' aere dolce che dal sol s' allegra. 122.

In the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun.

COMMENT.

The line quoted thrills me both with its lovely music and esthetic beauty and with its wonderful expression of thought.

It also imparts a feeling of nostalgia that is common not only to the souls of the Kingdom of Purgatory but also to the spirits of the Realm of Woe. This nostalgia is one of the most revealing characteristics of the actual spiritual world and of the world of the Poet's invention. This poem pulsates with humanity, a necessary condition for all true art, and, therefore, it is universal.

SABASTIANO VENTO, Professor, Royal University, Palermo, Italy, Author of La Prima Allegoria del Poema Dantesca.

CANTO VIII.

VIRGIL PRAISES THE INDIGNATION OF DANTE.

"Alma sdegnosa,
benedetta colei che in te s' incinse!" 44-45.

"Indignant soul, blessed be she that bore thee!"

COMMENT.

The lines are noteworthy because the poet, in wonderfully precise and lovely words, characterizes the influence of maternal qualities on such sons as are made thereby heavenly-bent. Those persons are also eminent because they are motivated by that tender regard to a right conscience, which Dante so admirably describes in Purg. III, 8.

O dignitosa coscienza e netta
come t' è picciol fallo amaro morso!

O noble and stainless conscience, how bitter a sting to thee is a slight failing!

DAVID ANGYAL, Ph.D., Professor, University of Budapest, Hungary.

CANTO IX.

THE THREE FURIES SUDDENLY APPEAR ON THE SUMMIT OF DIS AND THREATEN DANTE WITH THE HEAD OF MEDUSA.

E altro disse, ma non l' ho a mente;
però che l' occhio m' avea tutto tratto
ver l' alta torre a la cima rovente,

dove in un punto furon dritte ratto
tre furie infernal di sangue tinte,
che membra femminine avieno e atto,
e con idre verdissime eran cinte;
serpentelli e ceraste avean per crine,
onde le fiere tempie erano avvinte.
E quei, che ben conobbe le meschine
de la regina de l' etterno pianto,
"Guarda" mi disse "le feroci Erine.
Quest' è Megera dal sinistro canto;
quella che piange dal destro è Aletto;
Tesifone è nel mezzo"; e tacque a tanto.
Con l' unghie si fendea ciascuna il petto;
battiensi a palme; e gridavan sì alto,
ch' i' mi strinsi al poeta per sospetto.
"Vegna Medusa: sì 'l farem di smalto"
dicevan tutte riguardando in giuso:
"mal non vengiammo in Teseo l' assalto."
"Volgiti in dietro e tien lo viso chiuso;
chè se il Gorgòn si mostra e tu 'l vedessi,
nulla sarebbe del tornar mai suso."
Così disse 'l maestro; ed elli stessi
mi volse, e non si tenne a le mie mani,
che con le sue ancor non mi chiudessi.
O voi ch' avete li 'ntelletti sani,
mirate la dottrina che s' asconde
sotto il velame de li versi strani. 34-63.

And more he said, but I have it not in memory, for my eyes drew me wholly to the high tower with the flaming summit where all at once had risen three infernal Furies stained with blood, who had the limbs and the demeanor of women, and were begirt with the greenest hydras: for hair they had little serpents and cerastes wherewith their cruel temples were bound. And he (Virgil) who well knew the attendants of (Proserpine) the Queen of eternal wailing, said to me: "See the fierce Erinnis! That is Megaera on the left, and she who weeps on the right is Alecto; Tesiphone is in the middle;" and therewith he was silent. Each was tearing her breast with her claws; they were smiting themselves with their palms and were shrieking so loudly that from fear I pressed close to the Poet. "Let Medusa come that we may change him into stone," they all said, looking down; "Ill was it that we avenged not the assault of Theseus."

"Turn thy back and keep thy eyes closed, for if the Gorgon shows herself, and thou seest her, there would be no returning upwards again."

Thus said the Master, and he turned me himself, and did not limit himself to my hands, but with his own also he veiled my gaze. O ye who have sound minds, regard well the doctrine that hides itself beneath the veil of the strange verses.

COMMENT.

The Inferno's allegory showing the inherent evil of sin operating as Hell in the heart of man is, perhaps, nowhere more obvious than in the picture of the punishment of the misers and the prodigals. (VII, 25-36) With straining labor they are ceaselessly rolling heavy weights along the ground, backward and forward, forever and ever,—a task which gets them nowhere despite their toil and weariness. The symbolism springs into actuality when we reflect that every day misers and prodigals by enslaving themselves to their money are accomplishing nothing worth while and getting nowhere, despite the constant toil and self-denial imposed by their penuriousness or extravagance. Ever repeating these acts, as the object of constant endeavour, they starve their bodies and souls and form a character set in the inherent wickedness of Hell. Their sin is a fixed state of the soul, not a single act.

The allegory is not so evident in the passage quoted above. It "hides itself beneath the veil of strange verses." As interpreted by many commentators, the Furies with all the terror they arouse, symbolize the remorse of conscience which follows sins especially of malice, and Medusa is to be understood as sensual pleasure which renders man insensible as stone. Sensuality, indeed, hardens the heart, darkens the mind, and destroys in man not only faith in God but also all desire for things divine. The Poet on his way to salvation escapes these evils both by employing natural means and receiving aid from on high. He turns his back upon the fiends and shuts his eyes, and Virgil screens his disciple lest the latter be turned to stone by seeing the Gorgon—acts by which Dante would teach us that the custody of the senses is necessary if we are to succeed in life's warfare against sin. But something more is needed for final victory and that assistance comes later in the shape of an angel, the bearer of divine grace. (lines 64-105) The whole scene with the lesson it teaches, is, in my opinion, one of the most thrilling in the Inferno.

Mazzini S. Lapolla, New York City, Instructor in Italian, Wadleigh High School.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"I know nothing so intense as Dante. Consider, for example, to begin with the outermost development of his intensity, consider how he paints. He has a great power of vision; seizes the very type of a thing; presents that and nothing more. You remember that first view he gets of the Hall of Dite: *red* pinnacle, redhot cone of iron glowing through the dim immensity of gloom;—so vivid, so distinct, visible at once and forever! It is as an emblem of the whole genius of Dante. There is a brevity, an abrupt precision in him: Tacitus is not briefer, more condensed; and then in Dante it seems a natural condensation, spontaneous to the man. One smiting word; and then there is silence, nothing more said. His silence is more eloquent than words. It is strange with what a sharp decisive grace he snatches the true likeness of a matter: cuts into the matter as with a pen of fire." Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History.* Lecture III.

THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF THE DIVINE COMEDY.

O voi ch' avete li 'ntelletti sani,
mirate la dottrina che s' asconde
sotto il velame di li versi strani. 61-63.

O ye who have sound minds, regard well the doctrine which is hidden under the veil of these strange verses.

COMMENT.

1—These verses appeal to me particularly because, aside from their sonorous music, they might well serve as the motto of literature, suggesting what our times need most and what education, when based on the blessed humanities, should give: a keener understanding of wisdom, a greater appreciation of beauty.

Rudolph Altrocchi, Professor of Italian, Brown University, Providence, R. I., Editor of Italica.

2—These verses move me intensely. I believe that a profound doctrine is hidden in the Divine Comedy, a doctrine that was ignored and deliberately concealed by the first commentators, the revelation of which began with the great work of Ugo Foscoli. It was continued by another great poet, Giovanni Pascoli, and is now finally elucidated.

It is the secret doctrine of the Cross and of the Eagle, according to which the Eagle has its place beside the Cross to heal man of sin. The Eagle is the manifestation of Divine Justice, operating through the Empire. The Cross is the manifestation of Divine Wisdom working through the Church.

Dante represents the humanity of his time with the Papacy; it is, however, without the Empire. The Cross is without the Eagle. Humanity is about to be lost but it will be saved because of its hope in the Empire which will restore Justice! It is saved with the help of Virgil who was healed by the Eagle; of Aeneas,* the celestial messenger, who comes to break the doors of injustice by the power of the Eagle; of Cato, the custodian of Purgatory in the name of the Eagle; of Lucia, symbol of the same Eagle, who appears in the guise of an eagle and assists Dante by means of Beatrice, symbol of the power of the Cross.

The key of the poem consists in a series of more than thirty secret symmetries in which the Eagle, or the power of the Eagle, or the sign of the Eagle are beside either the Cross itself, or the power or the sign of the Cross.

Dante has only the Cross, Virgil only the Eagle. Beatrice is the power of the Cross, Lucia, the power of the Eagle.

One door of hell was shattered by the virtue of the Cross, one by the virtue of the Eagle. The souls in Purgatory are transported by an angel who appears in the form of the Cross, and by a woman who, in Dante's dream, has the figure of an Eagle. They find two guards, one, Cáto in the name of the Eagle, the other (the angel at the gate) in the name of the Cross. Dante passes through the fire twice, once by virtue of the Eagle, again through love of the Cross (Beatrice). In Paradise, there appears an Eagle of luminous spirits after a Cross of luminous Spirits, and the whole universe is so formed

* Most commentators see in the mysterious messenger (Inf. IX 64-87) an Angel of God. Others contend that it must be Aeneas. (The compiler.)

that those places where the Eagle appears and conquers are in perfect symmetry with those wherein the Cross appears or conquers. The universe has in its centre Lucifer in whose mouth are the traitors of the Eagle and of the Cross. The tree violated by Adam grows green again only when it has the Cross at its feet and the Eagle at its top. This admirable and profound secret doctrine of the poem repeats, in a grand song, the thought of *De Monarchia* that the Papacy and Empire are the two "remedies against the infirmity of sin."

One can readily understand why this doctrine is secret and why it could not have been divulged by the first commentators. But it reveals in the Sacred Poem a depth of thought, a grandeur and harmony of lines immensely greater than we had hitherto supposed.

That is why for me, the most touching passage in all the Poem is that in which "sound minds" are plainly invited to "regard well" the secret of "the doctrine hidden under the veils of these strange verses."

Luigi Valli, Rome, Italy, Professor at the Royal University of Rome.

FIENDS OPPOSE DANTE'S ENTRANCE TO THE CITY OF DIS. A MESSENGER FROM HEAVEN OPENS THE GATES.

E già venia su per le torbid' onde
un fracasso d' un suon, pien di spavento,
per che tremavano amendue le sponde,
non altrimenti fatto che d' un vento
impetuoso per li avversi ardori,
che fier la selva e sanz' alcun rattento
li rami schianta, abbatte e porta fori;
dinanzi polveroso va superbo,
e fa fuggir le fiere e li pastori.
Gli occhi mi sciolse e disse: "Or drizza il nerbo
del viso su per quella schiuma antica
per indi ove quel fummo è più acerbo."
Come le rane innanzi a la nemica
biscia per l' acqua si dileguan tutte,
fin ch' a la terra ciascuna s' abbica,
vid' io più di mille anime distrutte
fuggir così dinanzi ad un ch' al passo
passava Stige con le piante asciutte.

Dal volto rimovea quell' aere grasso,
menando la sinistra innanzi spesso;
e sol di quell' angoscia parea lasso.
Ben m' accorsi ch' egli era da ciel messo,
e volsimi al maestro; e quei fè segno
ch' i' stessi queto ed inchinassi ad esso.
Ahi quanto mi parea pien di disdegno!
Venne a la porta, e con una verghetta
l' aperse, che non v' ebbe alcun ritegno.
"O cacciati del ciel, gente dispetta."
cominciò elli in su l' orribil soglia,
"ond' esta oltracotanza in voi s' alletta?
Perchè recalcitrate a quella voglia
a cui non può il fin mai esser mozzo,
e che più volte v' ha cresciuta doglia?
Che giova ne le fata dar di cozzo?
Cerbero vostro, se ben vi ricorda,
ne porta ancor pelato il mento e 'l gozzo."
Poi si rivolse per la strada lorda,
e non fè motto a noi, ma fè sembiante
d' omo cui altra cura stringa e morda
che quella di colui che li è davante;
e noi movemmo i piedi inver la terra,
sicuri appresso le parole sante. 64-105

And now there came across the turbid waters a crash of a sound full of terror that made both shores to quake; a sound as of wind impetuous through the opposing heats, which smites the forest and, without any restraint, shatters the branches, beats them down and carries them away. In a cloud of dust it proudly goes forward and puts the wild beasts and shepherds to flight.

My eyes Virgil loosed and said: "Now turn thy sense of vision on the ancient scum yonder where the smoke is most pungent."

As frogs, before their enemy, the serpent, disperse through the water until every one is huddled on the earthy bottom, so did I see more than a thousand lost souls flee before one who was passing over the Styx, with feet dry shod. By waving his left hand oft before him he removed from his face the thick, vapourous air, and only by that annoyance did he seem to be weary. Well did I perceive that he was a Messenger from Heaven and I turned me to the Master, and he made a sign that I should remain quiet and bow down before the Messenger. Ah, how full of indignation he seemed to me! He came to the gate which offered no resistance and with a light rod he opened it.

"O outcasts from Heaven, abject race," he began as he stood upon

the horrible threshold. "Why dwells this insolence in you? Why do you rebel against that Will whose end can never be defeated—the Will which has many a time increased your pain? What does it profit you to butt against the Fates? Your Cerberus for doing so, if you remember well, still bears his chin and throat peeled." Then he returned across the miry way and spake no word to us, but seemed like a person whom other cares constrain and harass, than those of one who is before him. And we moved our feet toward the city, confident after his holy words.

COMMENT.

Of Dante's wealth of imagery, I recall the coming of the angel, both as a vision and as a symbol of the divine action. For dignity, power and tranquillity it is a picture that my imagination never loses—a lesson my heart ever retains.

GEORGE E. WOODBERRY, LL.D., author of The Inspiration of Poetry, Beverley, Mass.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE HERETICS.

Sì come ad Arli, ove Rodano stagna
Sì com' a Pola, presso del Carnaro
ch' Italia chiude e suoi termini bagna,
fanno i sepulcri tutt' il loco varo,
così facevan quivi d' ogni parte,
salvo che 'l modo v' era più amaro;
chè tra li avelli fiamme erano sparte,
per le quali eran sì del tutto accessi,
che ferro più non chiede verun' arte. 112-120.

As at Arles where the Rhone is stagnant; as at Pola near to the Gulf of Quarnero which shuts in Italy and bathes its confines, sepulchres make the whole place uneven; so did they here on every side, saving that the conditions were more bitter here; for within the tombs flames were scattered whereby they were so heated throughout, that iron more hot is not required by any craft.

COMMENT.

I choose this passage as my favourite because, during I do not know how many wanderings among Roman remains in both Italy and France, it has so persistently haunted me.

INEZ HAYNES IRWIN, New York City, President of the

Authors' Guild, Winner of the O. Henry memorial prize for the best short story of 1925.

CANTO X.

THE DEFIANT SCORN OF FARINATA THE GREAT GHIBELLINE CHIEF AND FREETHINKER.

I' avea già il mio viso nel suo fitto;
ed el s'ergea col petto e con la fronte
com' avesse l'inferno in gran dispitto. 34-36.

I had already fixed my eyes on his; and he rose upright with breast and with brow, as if he entertained great scorn of Hell.

COMMENT.

1—From a theological point of view such excess of pride may be reprehensible yet I cannot but admire the description as showing even in Hell the habitual attitude of Farinata.

Lewis Einstein, American Minister, Legation of the United States of America. Prague, Czechoslovakia. Author of American Foreign Policy.

2—These lines, in my judgment, are sublime. It is not an easy thing to express an idea so amazingly great with greater precision, force and clarity.

Eugenio Escribano, C.M., Madrid, Spain. Priest and Author.

3—I prefer these verses because I love the challenge to any torment and I believe that to struggle intensely and to rise victoriously is true life.

Gaspare Casella, Publisher, Naples, Italy.

4—That passage has always remained clear in my mind, as a supreme example of Dante's pathos and powerfully condensed style. It is a perfect picture of the haughty Florentine nobleman and of the fierce strife of factions in the small city-state of Italy. Then the effectiveness of that resumption of the dialogue after Cavalcante's interruption gives due emphasis to the strength of

Ciò mi tormenta più che questo letto. 78
It torments me more than this bed.

It is a device Dante uses elsewhere but never so effectively as here.

James Cappon, LL.D., F.R.S.C., F.N., B.A., Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

AN EMPEROR AND A CARDINAL, COMPANIONS OF FARINATA IN HELL.

Dissemi: "Qui con più di mille giaccio:
qua dentro è 'l secondo Federico
e 'l Cardinale; e de li altri mi taccio." 118-120

He said to me: "With more than a thousand do I lie here: herein are the Second Frederick and the Cardinal, and of the others I am silent."

COMMENT.

In these and similar verses Dante, with all "la reverenza de le summe chiavi" (Inf. XIX, 101), (reverence for the Supreme Keys), places in Hell Popes and Cardinals. The verses convey to me a salutary lesson.

Leaving to the Poet the responsibility of his judgment in regard to his victims, I am led to think that even the highest offices in the Church avail little against the judgment of contemporaries, still less against the verdict of history, and not at all against the infallible judgment of God.

And this thought is not without profit to me.

Bonaventure Cardinal Cerretti, Rome, Italy.

CANTO XI.

VIRGIL EXPLAINS TO DANTE THE TWO MAIN DIVISIONS OF HELL WHICH THEY ARE YET TO VISIT.

"Figliuol mio, dentro da cotesti sassi"
cominciò poi a dir "son tre cerchietti
di grado in grado, come que' che lassi.
Tutti son pien di spirti maladetti;
ma perchè poi ti basti pur la vista,
intendi come e perchè son costretti.

D' ogni malizia, ch' odio in cielo acquista,
ingiuria è 'l fine, ed ogni fin cotale
o con forza o con frode altrui contrista.
Ma perchè frode è de l' uom proprio male,
più spiace a Dio; e però stan di sutto
li frodolenti e più dolor li assale.
De' violenti il primo cerchio è tutto;
ma perchè si fa forza a tre persone,
in tre gironi è distinto e costrutto.
A Dio, a sè, al prossimo si pòne
far forza, dico in loro ed in lor cose,
come udirai con aperta ragione.
Morte per forza e ferute dogliose
nel prossimo si danno, e nel suo avere
ruine, incendii e tollette dannose;
onde omicide e ciascun che mal fiere,
guastatori e predon, tutti tormenta
lo giron primo per diverse schiere.
Puote omo avere in sè man violenta
e ne' suoi beni; e però nel secondo
giron convien che sanza pro si penta
qualunque priva sè del vostro mondo,
biscazza e fonde la sua facultade,
e piange là dove esser de' giocondo.
Puossi far forza ne la deitade,
col cuor negando e bestemmiando quella,
e spregiando ('n) natura sua bontade;
e però lo minor giron suggella
del segno suo e Soddoma e Caorsa
e chi, spregiando Dio col cor, favella.
La frode, ond' ogni coscienza è morsa,
può l' omo usare in colui che 'n lui fida
ed in quel che fidanza non imborsa.
Questo modo di retro par ch' uccida
pur lo vinco d' amor che fa natura;
onde nel cerchio secondo s' annida
ipocrisia, lusinghe e chi affattura,
falsità, ladroneccio e simonia,
ruffian, baratti, e simile lordura.
Per l' altro modo quell' amor s' oblia
che fa natura, e quel ch' è poi aggiunto,
di che la fede spezial si cria;

onde nel cerchio minore, ov' è 'l punto
de l' universo in su che Dite siede,
qualunque trade in etterno è consunto." 16-66.

"My son," he then began to say, "within those rocks are three circles from grade to grade like those thou art leaving. All are full of accursed spirits; but in order that the sight of them hereafter may alone suffice thee, hear how and wherefore they are confined. Of every kind of malice that merits the hatred of Heaven, the object aimed at is injury, and every such object either by force or fraud afflicts others. But because fraud is a sin peculiar to man, it more displeaseth God, and therefore the fraudulent are in the lower regions and greater punishment assails them.

The violent are all in the first circle (of the three below); but as violence can be wrought against three classes of persons, the circle is divided and constructed into three rounds; against God, against oneself, and against one's neighbor can violence be used: I mean against them and their possessions, as thou shalt hear in plain discourse. By violence death and grievous wounds may be inflicted upon one's neighbour; and against his substance may be perpetrated devastations, arson and rapacious exactions. Wherefore homicides, and everyone who smites injuriously, and thieves and spoilers are all tormented in the first circle, in separate bands.

Man may use violence against himself and his own goods; and, therefore in the second circle must needs repeat without avail whoever deprives himself of your world, gambles away and dissipates his property and weeps there where he ought to rejoice. Violence may be committed against the Deity by denying and blaspheming Him in the heart, and by despising Nature (i.e. by committing unnatural crimes) and God's bounty. And therefore the lesser round stamps with its seal both Sodom and Cahors and all such as speak with disparagement of God in their hearts.

Fraud for which every conscience is gnawed (with remorse), man may practise against one that confides in him and against him who reposes no confidence. This latter form seems to sever only the bond of love that Nature makes; wherefore in the second circle (of the City of Dis, the Eighth of Hell) nest hypocrites, flatterers, sorcerers, deceivers, thieves, simonists, panders, barrators and such-like filth. By the other form of fraud is blotted out that love which Nature makes, and also that which afterwards is added, giving birth to special trust. Hence in the smallest circle, where is the centre of the universe, on which Dis rests, all traitors are eternally consumed."

COMMENT.

The student of the Inferno is more than likely to agree with the statement of Coleridge that the topographic reality of Dante's Hell is one of his great charms. "He thus takes the thousand delusive forms of a nature worse than chaos, having no reality but from the passions which they excite, and compels them into the service of the permanent." In the five upper circles are punished sins of incontinence (immoderateness), sins due to weakness of will. Those sins are lust, gluttony, avarice with its opposite excess, prodigality, and wrath.

In the passage quoted above, Dante, through Virgil, classifies in two main divisions the more fearful punishments reserved for sins of perverted will or malice. The first division, embracing the sixth and seventh circles, shows how sins of brutish violence are punished. If the violence was directed against one's neighbor, as in the case of tyrants and robbers, the punishment is immersion in boiling blood; those who committed violence against themselves, as the suicides, are turned into gnarled trees; those whose violence was aimed at God, as blasphemers and offenders against nature or human industry, suffer a rain of fire in a sandy desert.

The second division with two circles concerns the punishment of sins of malice. In the eighth circle with its concentric ditches are deceivers of sundry kinds, for example, hypocrites crushed beneath the weight of leaden capes which outside are glittering with gold, also thieves who, as tormented spirits, are transformed into serpents and back again.

In the ninth circle are traitors to kindred, country, guests and benefactors. They are immersed in the eternal ice which forms the very floor of Hell, and this punishment typifies how absolutely devoid of love were their cold, calculating hearts. The whole classification of the Inferno is a most striking demonstration of how logically Dante makes the punishment fit the crime.

The Poet's purpose, of course, is a moral one, to strike the reader with a sense of the horror of sin and not merely with the sense of the horror of its punishment. Needless to say that motive will fail of realization if even for a single instance the reader experiences deeper physical impressions of

the punishment than moral impressions aroused by the vision of sin in its essential nature, with its woeful waste of life's blessing and its frustration of the soul's destiny. And herein lies the perfection of the Inferno. The allegory shows us the souls in Hell, with characters no different from what they were on earth. Unchanged by the retribution that follows evil doing, they are still rebels to God's will. It is true that many are ashamed of their evil deeds and seek to hide themselves, but their shame, as in this life, springs, not from a sense of guilt and its resulting contrition, but from their sins' having found them out in their true character and having penalized them with just consequences. These sinners are shown with their disguises now torn off. Their hideous faces are seen at a glance. They stand forth as an appalling, loathsome reality, teaching us to hate sin and fear and abhor it, always and everywhere. Punishment, I repeat, has not converted them, for having deadened their consciousness of the evil of sin, they are still unrepentant and cast blame for their ruined lives, not upon themselves, but upon others. "They blasphemed God and their parents; the human kind, the place, the time, the origin of their seed and of their birth." (Inf. III, 103.)

With mounting interest the reader comes to see then in the allegory the tragedy of the transgressor. As Wicksteed in his *Dante,* p. 48, says, "Horrors which rise and ever rise in intensity till they culminate in some of the ghastliest scenes ever conceived by mortal brain are from first to last held under absolute control, are forced to support and intensify moral conceptions which in less mighty hands they would have numbed and deadened. Oh, the pity of this sin, the unutterable, indelible pity of it! Its wail can never be stilled in our hearts while thought and memory remain. The misery of some forms of sin, the foul shame of others, the vileness, the hatefulness, the hideous deformity of others yet—this, and not horror at the punishment of sin, is what Dante stamps and brands upon our hearts as we descend with him towards the central depths."

Elizabeth M. Brophy, Jamestown, N. Y.

HONEST DOUBT.

O sol che sani ogni vista turbata,
tu mi contenti sì quando tu solvi,
che, non men che saver, dubbiar m'aggrata. 91-93.

O Sun (i.e. Virgil) who healest every troubled vision, thou so contentest me with thy solutions that doubting, no less than knowledge, pleases me.

COMMENT.

1—I would choose these words concerning doubting as a sort of a scholar's motto, an epitome of modern endeavour in every field and never more applicable than today—for without honest doubt little progress can be expected.

WALTER WOODBURN HYDE, Ph.D., Professor of Greek, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Author of Olympic Victor Monuments and Greek Athletic Art.

2—This passage, in my judgment, is one of the best examples of Dante's condensation and brevity of expression and of his depth and subtlety of thought. The context shows that Dante delights in doubt only for the sake of having it solved by a higher wisdom. But I am willing to take the passage either with or without the context, as at least one of my favourites, and, for the moment, the favourite.

CHARLES HIDDEN PAGE, Ph.D., Hanover, N. H., Author of A History of Japanese Poetry.

ART AND NATURE.

L'arte vostra quella, quanto puote,
segue, come 'l maestro fa il discente:
sì che vostr' arte a Dio quasi è nepote. 103-105.

Your Art, as far as it can, follows her (Nature) even as the pupil does his master, so that your Art, as it were, is the grandchild of God.

COMMENT.

To me this means that through the arts man can comprehend the beauty of creation and thereby know more truly Jehovah, the Creator, and the truth of the unending life.

HARRY MUIR KURTZWORTH, Painter, designer and lecturer on Art, Evanston, Ill. Author of Genius, Talent, Ability or Mediocrity.

CANTO XII.

THE MINOTAUR, A TYPE OF UNNATURAL PASSIONS, FAILS TO ARREST THE PROGRESS OF THE POETS.

Quando vide noi, se stesso morse,
sì come quei cui l'ira dentro fiacca.
Lo savio mio inver lui gridò: "Forse
tu credi che qui sia il duca d'Atene,
che su nel mondo la morte ti porsé?
Partiti, bestia: chè questi non vene
ammaestrato da la tua sorella,
ma vassi per veder le vostre pene."
Qual è quel toro che si slaccia in quella
c' ha ricevuto già 'l colpo mortale,
che gir non sa, ma qua e là saltella,
vid' io lo Minotauro far cotale;
e quello accorto gridò: "Corri al varco;
mentre ch' è in furia, è buon che tu ti cale." 14-27.

When he saw us he gnawed himself like unto one whom anger inwardly consumes. My Sage cried out toward him: "Perchance thou thinkest that here is the Duke of Athens (Theseus) who up in the world brought death to thee. Get thee gone, monster, for this one (Dante) cometh not instructed by thy sister (Ariadne) but is passing by to see your punishments." As is that bull that breaks away at the instant he has just received his fatal stroke, who cannot go forward, but plunges hither and thither, so saw I the Minotaur do the like. And my wary Guide cried out: "Run to the pass: while he is raging, it is well that thou descend."

COMMENT.

During the World War, when I was Official Commissioner of our army I had occasions to think with admiration of Dante in regard to the passage quoted above. At the slaughter of oxen it sometimes happened that a single blow failed to kill the animal. Instead of falling to the ground it tried to escape, staggering and bellowing. At such a sight there came to my mind these verses: "As is that bull that breaks away at the

instant he has just received his fatal stroke, who cannot go forward, but plunges hither and thither." Fittingly came the words to describe this direct experience of reality rather than to recall the Virgilian episode in which is depicted the Dantean Minotaur.

PIETRO VERRUA, Professor, Municipal Institute of Padua, Italy, Author of L'Invocatione alla Morte.

CANTO XIII.

THE FOREST OF SUICIDES. THE HARPIES.

Non era ancor di là Nesso arrivato,
quando noi ci mettemmo per un bosco
che da nessun sentiero era segnato.
Non fronda verde, ma di color fosco;
non rami schietti, ma nodosi e 'nvolti;
non pomi v' eran, ma stecchi con tosco:
non han sì aspri sterpi nè sì folti
quelle fiere selvagge che in odio hanno
tra Cecina e Corneto i luoghi colti.
Quivi le brutte Arpie lor nidi fanno,
che cacciar de le Strofade i Troiani
con tristo annunzio di futuro danno.
Ali hanno late, e colli e visi umani,
piè con artigli, e pennuto il gran ventre;
fanno lamenti in su li alberi strani. 1-15.

Io sentia d' ogni parte trarre guai,
e non vedea persona che 'l facesse;
per ch' io tutto smarrito m' arrestai.
Cred' io ch' ei credette ch' io credesse
che tante voci uscisser tra quei bronchi
da gente che per noi si nascondesse.
Però disse 'l maestro: "Se tu tronchi
qualche fraschetta d' una d' este piante,
li pensier c' hai si faran tutti monchi."
Allor porsi la mano un poco avante,
e colsi un ramicel da un gran pruno;
e'l tronco suo gridò: "Perchè mi schiante?"
Da che fatto fu poi di sangue bruno,
ricominciò a dir: "Perchè mi scerpi?
non hai tu spirto di pietà alcuno?

Uomini fummo, e or siam fatti sterpi:
ben dovrebb' esser la tua man più pia,
se state fossimo anime di serpi."
Come d' un stizzo verde ch' arso sia
da l' un de' capi, che da l' altro geme
e cigola per vento che va via;
sì de la scheggia rotta usciva inseme
parole e sangue; ond' io lasciai la cima
cadere, e setti come 'l uom che teme. 22-45.

Nessus had not yet reached the other side, when we moved into a wood, which was marked by no path. Not green the foliage, but of dusky colour, not smooth the branches, but gnarled and intertwined, not any fruits were there but thorns with poison. No thickets so rough or so dense have those savage beasts which hold in aversion the cultivated tracts between Cecina and Corneto. Here the foul Harpies make their nests who drove the Trojans from the Strophades, with dire announcement of future calamity. Broad wings they have, and necks and faces human, feet with claws, and feathered their huge bellies. Upon the strange trees they make mournful cries.

I heard wailings uttered on every side, and I saw no one who might make them; whereat quite bewildered, I stood still. I think that he (Virgil) thought that I was thinking that all these voices issued amid those stumps from people who because of us had hidden themselves. Therefore said the Master, "If thou break off a twig from one of these trees, the thoughts thou hast will all be cut short." Then I stretched my hand a little forward and plucked a tiny branch from a great thorn tree, and its trunk cried out: "Why dost thou rend me?" When it had become dark with blood it began again to cry: "Why dost thou tear me? Hast thou not any spirit of pity? Men we were, and now we are turned into trees; well might thine hand have been more merciful, even had we been souls of serpents." As from a green brand that is on fire at one of its ends, and from the other exudes bubbles, and hisses with the air that is escaping: so from the broken twig there came forth together both words and blood: thereupon I let the branch fall, and stood like a man who is in fear.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"In no part of his writings does Dante show greater skill than in his contrasts. Compare the death-like gloom, the horror, the inhospitable density of the thickets, the tangled thorn bushes, and finally the brutal winged monsters of the forest

of Hell, with the soft enchantment of the *divina foresta spessa e viva,* as related in *Purg.* XXVIII. In Hell he has just quitted the river of blood, in the divine forest he approaches a rill so limpid that all the purest streams in the world would appear turbid beside it. A soft fragrant breeze freshens the air, and from it (l. 10).

" . . . le fronde, tremolando pronte,
tutte quante piegavano . . .
. . . . . .
non però dal lor esser dritto sparte
tanto, che gli augelletti per le cime
lasciasser d' operare ogni lor arte;
ma con piena letizia l' ore prime,
cantando, ricevieno intra le foglie,
che tenevan bordone alle sue rime."

Very different are the ghastly winged beings, who with repulsive bodies, discordant cries, and destructive actions, are the denizens of the forest of woe."

W. W. VERNON, *Readings from the Inferno,* I. 452.

CANTO XV.

THE CONCENTRATED ATTENTION OF A TROOP OF SOULS.

Già eravam da la selva rimossi
tanto, ch' i' non avrei visto dov' era,
perch' io in dietro rivolto mi fossi,
quando incontrammo d' anime una schiera
che venian lungo l' argine, e ciascuna
ci riguardava come suol da sera
guardare uno altro sotto nuova luna;
e sì ver noi aguzzavan le ciglia
come 'l vecchio sartor fa ne la cruna. 13-22.

We were now so remote from the wood that I could not have seen where it was even had I turned back, when we met a troop of souls, who were coming alongside of the bank; and each of them was looking at us, as in the evening men are wont to look at one another under the new moon, sharpening their eyebrows towards us, as an old tailor does with his needle.

COMMENT.

The Divina Commedia is a book for all time because it enshrines the thoughts and experience of men of all times. Its appeal is universal, and coincides with what is synonymous with humanity.

We are all familiar with the difficulty which an old tailor has in trying to thread his needle. In the words of the Inferno quoted, we are made to realize the concentrated intensity with which the denizens of the lower world fixed their gaze on the Poet.

BERNARD J. MAHONEY, D.D., Bishop of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

BRUNETTO LATINO'S PROPHECY AS TO DANTE'S SUCCESS.

"Se tu segui tua stella,
non puoi fallire a glorioso porto." * 55-56.

"If thou follow thy star, thou canst not miss the glorious port."

COMMENT.

1—I have always thought that if in life each one followed his own inclination, the disillusioned would not be so numerous.

ANGELO SAGLIETTO, Captain of the Steamship Roma, Italian-American Shipping Co., New York City.

2—I hardly feel that it is necessary for me to indicate why I love this passage. It seems so obviously to be a summons to the soul of man to be true to itself, to be true to the highest that it can know and see, as to require no further explanation.

STEPHEN S. WISE, Ph.D., Rabbi of the Free Synagogue, New York City. Author of Child Versus Parent.

3—It seems to me that these lines contain the exact orientation of each man's life and that, even in the face of outrageous fortune, the passage can furnish excellent light for the hard route we all have to follow to obtain success.

G. MONTEFINALE, Commander, Royal Navy, Rome, Italy.

* If thou follow thy inclinations given to thee by Nature under the influence of the benign star, thou wilt certainly reach thy goal.

DANTE'S TRIBUTE TO BRUNETTO LATINO.

"Se fosse tutto pieno il mio dimando"
rispuosi lui, "voi non sareste ancora
de l' umana natura posto in bando;
chè 'n la mente m' è fitta, e or m' accora,
la cara e buona imagine paterna
di voi quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
m' insegnavate come l' uom s' etterna:
e quant' io l' abbia in grado, mentr' io vivo
convien che ne la mia lingua si scerna. 79-87

"If all my petitions were fully granted," I answered him, "you would not be placed (by death) in banishment from human nature; for in my memory is fixed, and now fills my heart that dear, kind, paternal image of yours when in the world from hour to hour you taught how man makes himself eternal; how much I cherish your teaching and your person, let my tongue proclaim as long as I live."

COMMENT.

1—Being a teacher and believing firmly that the most important things taught are those of the spirit, I have thought for a long time that the phrase "come l' uom s'etterna," is one of the finest definitions of education that has ever been penned. The whole passage in its pathos and beauty makes a peculiar appeal to the teacher and the scholar.

KENNETH C. M. SILLS, LL.D., President of Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine. Author of The First American and Other Poems.

2—The whole passage has always been connected in my mind with the two teachers to whom I owe most, Professors M. T. McLaughlin and Albert S. Cooke of Yale, both of whom were Dante lovers. Professor McLaughlin was my first inspiration in college and I began my study of Dante with him. His untimely death, in the year immediately following my course with him, was a great loss to Yale students.

FRANK H. CHASE, Reference Librarian of the Public Library, Boston, Mass.

3—The gratitude of pupil to teacher is one that I feel deeply and I, in turn, am grateful to Dante for his noble ex-

pression of it. The English rendering of the passage that I like best is the one that Longfellow gave, not in his translation of the Divine Comedy, but in his "Morituri Salutamus" in which he adopted it as the expression of his own feeling towards one of his boyhood's teachers,—whom I myself once met:

"Oh, never from the memory of my heart
Your dear, paternal image shall depart,
Who while on earth, ere yet by death surprised,
Taught me how mortals are immortalized;
How grateful am I for that patient care
All my life long my language shall declare."

HARRY L. KOOPMAN, Litt.D., Providence, R. I. Author of The Booklover and His Books.

4—I have been in love with the last half of the third last line ever since my hungry eyes fed on it. The whole passage and situation have appealed to me strangely always, with its mixed tenderness and grim frankness. But particularly the clause, 'How man makes himself a habitant of eternity by assiduous cultivation of art,' seems to me an inimitable success in brevity and solidity of utterance.

LUCIUS A. SHERMAN, Ph.D., LL.D., Lincoln, Neb., Dean of the Faculty of the University of Nebraska. Author of Analytics of Literature.

CONSCIENCE AND CONSTANCY IN ADVERSITY.

(Dante to Brunetto Latino).

"Tanto vogl' io che vi sia manifesto,
pur che mia coscienza non mi garra,
ch' a la Fortuna, come vuol, son presto" 91-93.

"This much I would have you know; provided my conscience upbraid me not, I am ready for Fortune as she wills."

COMMENT.

Here, more than in any other part of the divine poem, appears moral greatness. When Dante wrote these lines all youth had departed from him. He was, indeed, nearing fifty years of age and the sorrows and adversities of exile had already

whitened his hair prematurely. He assumes the rôle of a prophet to his old teacher, Brunetto Latino. An ungrateful city had closed her gates against him and cast him forth to beg his way through the land of Italy. It still persisted in being his enemy and "l'ingrato popolo maligno" became every day more obstinate and rebellious.

Now that the facts had occurred, now that the exile was no longer a prophecy but a reality, Dante pauses in the midst of his writing, to question himself. What matter the pains endured and the evils still to be met, if he can proudly and sadly face his conscience and thence obtain approval—absolution for sins he never committed?

In the precise form of the hendecasyllabic and the *terzina,* Dante has here sculptured an eternal truth that is fondly repeated by those who are like him—those who rather than blush before their conscience, prefer to suffer in silence and bow to uncertain Fortune.

GIUSEPPE LIPPARINI, Professor in the Royal University, Bologna, Italy.

CANTO XVII.

THE POETS' AMAZING DESCENT TO THE CIRCLE OF THE FRAUDULENT.

Come la navicella esce di loco
in dietro in dietro, sì quindi si tolse;
e poi ch' al tutto si sentì a gioco,
là 'v' era il petto, la coda rivolse,
e quella tesa, come anguilla, mosse,
e con le branche l' aere a sè raccolse.
Maggior paura non credo che fosse
quando Fetòn abbandonò li freni,
per che 'l ciel, come pare ancor, si cosse;
nè quando Icaro misero le reni
sentì spennar per la scaldata cera,
gridando il padre a lui 'Mala via tieni!';
che fu la mia, quando vidi ch' i' era
ne l' aere d' ogni parte, e vidi spenta
ogni veduta fuor che de la fera.
Ella sen va notando lenta lenta;
rota e discende, ma non me n'accorgo
se non ch' al viso e di sotto mi venta.

Io sentia già da la man destra il gorgo
  far sotto noi un orribile scroscio,
  per che con gli occhi 'n giù la testa sporgo.
Allor fu' io più timido a lo scoscio,
  però ch' i' vidi fuochi e senti' pianti;
  ond' io tremando tutto mi raccoscio.
E vidi poi, che nol vedea davanti,
  lo scendere e'l girar per li gran mali
  che s' appressavan da diversi canti.
Come 'l falcon ch' è stato assai su l' ali,
  che sanza veder logoro o uccello
  fa dire al falconiere "Ohmè, tu cali!"
discende lasso onde si move snello,
  per cento rote, e da lunge si pone
  dal suo maestro, disdegnoso e fello;
così ne puose al fondo Gerione
  al piè al piè de la stagliata rocca
  e, discarcate le nostre persone,
si dileguò come da carda cocca. 100-136.

Just as the little boat pushes back and back from land, so did Geryon withdraw; and when he felt himself all free in empty space, he turned his tail where his breast had been, stretched it out, wiggled like an eel, and with his arms paddled and pulled the air. I do not think there could have been greater fear when Phaëton abandoned the reins, whereby the Heavens, as is still apparent (in the Milky Way), were scorched; nor when the ill-fated Icarus felt his loins melt with the heated wax, his father shrieking to him: "Badly dost thou fly," than was my fear when I saw myself surrounded by the air and every sight effaced except the monster. It went along swimming very slowly, wheeling and descending and I perceived the movement only by the blowing on my face of a gentle wind which came from below.

Already I heard on my right hand the whirlpool beneath us making a horrible roar, whereupon, I stretched out my head with my eyes downward. Then I became more terrified, for I saw fires and heard lamentations, wherefore all-a-quiver I crouched down. And I saw then what I had not seen before, the descending and the circling, from the grievous horrors that were getting nearer on every side. As the falcon that has been long upon the wing without seeing lure or bird causes the falconer to say: "Ah me! thou wilt alight," descends wearily, wheeling many times (to the place) whence it set forth swiftly and lands far from its master disdainful and sullen; so at the bottom did Geryon deposit us, at the very foot of the rugged cliff, and relieved of us (his passengers) bolted away like an arrow released from a bow.

COMMENT.

Very justly does Dante place the fraudulent in a part of Hell lower than that wherein are punished sinners whose damnation comes from transgressions which betray infirmity of will, for fraud is a sin of deliberate deception by which a person is harmed. It is an act or artifice, therefore, by which undue advantage is taken of another so that he suffers injury in his person or possessions. It is but just that the offender should suffer accordingly. Hovering over the ten ditches of the Fraudulent is Geryon "the filthy image of Fraud, he who defiles the whole world." He is represented as a monster, having the face of an honest man to indicate that Fraud begins by flattering and beguiling. His two hairy arms tell us of rapine. All the rest of his body is that of a serpent with a pointed tail, forked at the extremity like that of a scorpion, wherewith to slay, to denote craft and violence. Virgil and Dante use Geryon as an aeroplane in which to descend from the outer edge of the seventh circle of Hell to the foot of the precipice which divides it from the eighth. Dante's description of this descent is an instructive lesson of how the habit of deception which becomes the predominant vice of a soul, carries it all unheeding ever downward and downward until, happily, conscience, startled by the fear of God, recalls the sinner to the ways of penance and reparation.

JAMES A. PISARRI, Albany, N. Y., Rehabilitation Department, University of the State of New York.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"In his delineations, Dante has a most beautiful sharp grace, the quickest and clearest intellect. It is just that honesty with which his mind was set upon his subject, that carries it out. Take, for instance, the scene of the monster Geryon, with Virgil and Dante, where he describes how he landed with them in the eighth circle. He says that Geryon was like a falcon in quest of prey, hovering without seeing either the lure or the game. When the falconer cries, 'Ohmè tu cali' ('Come down!'),* he descends, wheeling round and round,

* Dr. Paget Toynbee remarks that Inf. XVII, 129 is "not imperative, as Carlyle renders, but, Alack! thou stoopest (i.e. descendest)."

and sits at a distance disdainful and disobedient. Just so was Geryon. And then 'he bolted up like an arrow out of the bow.' There are not above a dozen words in this picture, but it is one that will last forever!" Thomas Carlyle, *Dante and the Divina Commedia.* Lecture V.

CANTO XIX.

DANTE'S DENUNCIATION OF CORRUPT ECCLESIASTICS.

"Fatto v' avete Dio d' oro e d' argento:
e che altro è da voi a l' idolatre,
se non ch' elli uno, e voi ne orate cento?
Ahi, Costantin,* di quanto mal fu matre,
non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
che da te prese il primo ricco patre!" 110-117.

"Gold and silver ye have made to be your God and wherein do ye differ from the idolators save that they worship one, and ye a hundred? Ah, Constantine how much evil arose, not from thy conversion but from that dower, which the first rich Father took from thee!"

COMMENT.

1—This passage is my favourite not because it is the most glowing with beauty or imagination, but because of its searching significance. Also because it so strikingly illustrated Dante's power of condensation.

CAROLINE A. MASON, Brookline, Mass. Author of The Spell of Italy.

2—Coördinating with these verses, *Purgatorio* XX, 85-103 and *Paradiso* XXVII, 22-30, I like to address Dante thus—

O poet great with thought sublime,
Though chronicler of lesser claim;
Still truth and justice holds thy Rhyme—
E'en as thou damn the Pontiff's name,
Thy lines breathe help against fair France,
Philippe's dark crime, Anagni's lance.

* The reference is to the so-called Donation of Emperor Constantine the Great. Cf. The Catholic Encyclopedia vol. V, p. 118.

François Leon Chartier de Moussy, Canon of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, France.

CANTO XX.

THE ETRUSCAN AUGUR, ARONTA, WHO LIVED IN THE MOUNTAINS OF CARRARA.

Aronta è quei ch' al ventre li s' atterga,
che ne' monti di Luni, dove ronca
lo Carrarese che di sotto alberga,
ebbe tra' bianchi marmi la spelonca
per sua dimora; onde a guardar le stelle
e'l mar non li era la veduta tronca. 46-51.

Aruns is that one who has his back near his (Tiresia's) belly. In the mountain city of Luna, situated in the plain where lived the Carrarese, he had for his dwelling a cave of white marble; from it he could observe the stars and the sea with view unobstructed.

COMMENT.

This famous passage was written during Dante's stay at Larzana (during his exile) at the foot of the Carrara mountains. His visit to the latter and the marble quarries afforded him a boundless view of sea and stars which gave boundless scope to his philosophical meditations.

C. Du Riche Preller, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.R.S.E., Edinburgh, Scotland.

CANTO XXI.

CORRUPT OFFICIALS (BARRATORS) ARE IMMERSED IS A LAKE OF BOILING PITCH. DEMONS, SHADOWS OF THEIR SINS, REND THEM.

Quale nell' arzanà de' Viniziani
bolle l' inverno la tenace pece
a rimpalmare i legni lor non sani,
chè navicar non ponno; in quella vece
chi fa suo legno novo e chi ristoppa
le coste a quel che più viaggi fece;
chi ribatte da proda e chi da poppa;
altri fa remi e altri volge sarte;
chi terzeruolo e artimon rintoppa;

tal, non per foco, ma per divin' arte,
bollia là giuso una pegola spessa,
che 'nviscava la ripa d' ogni parte.
I'vedea lei, ma non vedea in essa
mai che le bolle che 'l bollor levava,
e gonfiar tutta, e riseder compressa. 7-21.

(The quotation is continued on the next page under the title The Black Devil Nero.)

As in the Arsenal of the Venetians, in winter boils the sticky pitch for smearing their unsound vessels, because they cannot go to sea, and in lieu thereof, one builds his ship anew, one caulks the ribs of that one which hath made many voyages; one hammers at the prow, and another at the stern; one is making oars, and another is twisting cordage; one mends the foresail, and another the mainsail—so down below there a thick pitch was boiling—not by fire but by divine agency—which belimed the bank on every side. I saw it, but saw naught therein, except the bubbles which the boiling raised, and the heaving and compressed subsiding of the whole.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"Doubtless you consider all this extremely absurd, and are of opinion that such things are not likely to happen in the next world. Perhaps not; nor is it clear that Dante believed they would; but I should be glad if you would tell me what you think *is* likely to happen there. In the meantime, please to observe Dante's figurative meaning, which is by no means absurd. Every one of his scenes has symbolic purpose, down to the least detail. This lake of pitch is money, which, in our own vulgar English phrase, 'sticks to people's fingers'; it clogs and plasters its margin all over, because the mind of a man bent on dishonest gain makes everything within its reach dirty; it bubbles up and down, because underhand gains nearly always involve alternate excitement and depression; and it is haunted by the most cruel and indecent of all the devils, because there is nothing so mean and nothing so cruel, but a peculator will do it. So you may read every line figuratively, if you choose." . . . Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera,* XVIII.

THE BLACK DEVIL NERO.

Mentr' io là giù fisamente mirava,
lo duca mio, dicendo "Guarda, guarda!"
mi trasse a sè del loco dov' io stava.
Allor mi volse come l 'om cui tarda
di veder quel che li convien fuggire.
e cui paura subita sgagliarda,
che, per veder, non indugia 'l partire;
e vidi dietro a noi un diavol nero
correndo su per lo scoglio venire.
Ahi quant' elli era ne l'aspetto fero!
e quanto mi parea ne l'atto acerbo,
con l' ali aperte, e sovra i piè leggiero!
L'omero suo, ch'era aguto e superbo,
carcava un peccator con ambo l'anche,
e quei tenea de' piè ghermito il nerbo. 22-36.

While I was gazing steadfastly down below there, my Guide exclaiming "Take care, take care!" drew me to him from the spot where I was standing. Then I turned round, like one who is slow to see what it behooves him to fly and whom fear unmans even when looking back he runs away: and I saw a black devil come running up behind us along the crag. Ah how ferocious was his aspect! and how rough in action he seemed to me! With wings outstretched he was flying, or while running he was light of foot. His shoulder, which was sharp and high, was laden with a sinner with both haunches, the sinew of whose feet he closely gripped.

COMMENT.

Marvelous sculpture, to which the artist has added a shading of somber colour, casting a sinister light upon the diabolical figure and throwing it into bold relief.

No painter or sculptor, regardless of his skill, could do justice, as has the Poet, to the fierceness of aspect, the sharpness of posture expressing inward diabolical satisfaction, which is made palpable, and, especially, to the swift flight "on light feet."

Although Dante has represented this devil with that fine gradation from the general to the particular, which requires great descriptive power, the touch is so rapid, the movement so animated that the described figure seems to leap forth in all its diabolical fierceness. While the description leaves you al-

most frozen with horror, at the same moment it awakens a sense of admiration for the fine artistic sentiment with which the figure is drawn, so far removed from that abominable deformity with which most legendary demons were described or painted by artists and sculptors of the Middle Ages.

Nor does our admiration stop with the figure of the demon, for, on his powerful shoulder is perched the miserable, trembling form of a sinner, on which our gaze last falls, and the complete group is perfectly outlined with a humane sense of pity mingled with disgust and terror.

That art which so well described such fierceness of aspect, was equally capable of depicting the most angelic beauty that human mind could conceive:

> A noi venia la creatura bella
> bianco vestito e ne la faccia quale
> par tremolando mattutina stella. Purg. XII, 88-90.

The beauteous being clothed in white came to us, and in his countenance, such as appears the tremulous morning star.

ENRICO MESTICA, Apiro (Macerata), Italy. Author of Dante Alighieri alla Mente e al Cuore dei Giovanetti Italiani.

CANTO XXII.

THE MARCH OF THE DEMONS.

Io vidi già cavalier muover campo,
e cominciare stormo e far lor mostra,
e tal volta partir per loro scampo;
corridor vidi per la terra vostra,
o Aretini, e vidi gir gualdane,
fedir torneamenti e correr giostra;
quando con trombe, e quando con campane,
con tamburi e con cenni di castella,
e con cose nostrali e con istrane;
nè già con sì diversa cennamella
cavalier vidi muover nè pedoni,
nè nave a segno di terra o di stella.
Noi andavam con li diece demoni:
ahi fiera compagnia! ma ne la chiesa
coi santi, ed in taverna co' ghiottoni. 1-15

Ere now I have seen cavalry move their camp, begin the assault, hold their muster, and sometimes set forth on their escape. I have seen raiders overrunning your land, O Aretines, and freebooters standing. I have seen tournaments fought and jousts run, sometimes with trumpets and sometimes with bells, with drums and castle-signals and with things native and foreign, but never with such an uncouth blast did I see cavalry or infantry set out or ship sail by sign of land or of star. We were going along with the ten demons. Ah, the frightful company! but *in the Church with saints and with gluttons in the tavern.*

COMMENT.

Dante gives us here an extraordinarily vivid picture of cavalry in action. It is a description in which the rhythm of their movements is made perceptible by the rhythm of the verses.

RICHARD T. HOLBROOK, Ph.D., Professor of French, University of California, Berkeley, California. Author of Dante and the Animal Kingdom, Portraits of Dante.

CANTO XXIII.

VIRGIL AND DANTE, ON SEEING THE TWO DEMONS FALL INTO THE PITCH, GO FORWARD IN SILENCE.

Taciti, soli, sanza compagnia
n'andavam l'un dinanzi e l' altro dopo,
come frati minor vanno per via. 1-3

Silent, alone and without company, we went on, Virgil before and I behind, even as Friars Minor go along the way.

COMMENT.

These verses seem to suggest a vastness, a peace, a philosophy and a graphic memory of religious seclusion, that constitute unusual inspiration.

THOMAS WALSH, Ph.D., LL.D., Brooklyn, New York, Poet and critic. Author of Don Folquet.

THE HYPOCRITES.

Là giù trovammo una gente dipinta
che giva intorno assai con lenti passi
piangendo e nel sembiante stanca e vinta.

Elli avean cappe con cappucci bassi
dinanzi a li occhi, fatte de la taglia
che in Clugnì per li monaci fassi.
Di fuor dorate son sì ch' elli abbaglia;
ma dentro tutte piombo, e gravi tanto,
che Federigo le mettea di paglia.
Oh in etterno faticoso manto!
Noi ci volgemmo ancor pur a man manca
con loro insieme, intenti al tristo pianto. 58-69

There below we found a painted people who were going around with very slow steps, weeping, and in appearance weary and exhausted. They wore cloaks with deep hoods before their eyes, made of the same cut as those of the monks of Cluny. On the outside they are covered with dazzling gilt, but within all is lead, and so heavy that (by comparison) Frederick used to put on cloaks of straw. O weary mantle of Eternity! We turned, still ever to the left hand, along with them, intent upon their dreary weeping.

COMMENT.

Shown as a painted people, wearing hooded cloaks similar to the habits of Capuchin monks, but different from them in that these cover the eyes and are of heaviest lead with dazzling gilt on the outside, the Hypocrites are discovered in the Inferno. How heavy is their spirit, how gnawed their hearts, as they move among their fellow-creatures! The Hypocrites live only to conceal the truth and to put forth deceit, falsehood, craftiness and lack of love.

Orazio Panza, Milan, Italy.

CANTO XXIV.

VIRGIL ASSISTS DANTE UP THE PRECIPITOUS AND RUGGED ASCENT OF MALEBOLGE.

E come quei ch' adopera ed estima,
che semple par che 'nnanzi si proveggia
così, levando me su ver la cima
d' un ronchione, avvisava un' altra scheggia
dicendo: "Sovra quella poi t' aggrappa:
ma tenta pria s' è tal ch' ella ti reggia." 25-30

And as one who calculates while he works and always seems to make provision beforehand: so he, as he lifted me up towards the top of a great rock, had his eye on another boulder saying: "Now clamber over that, but first try whether it will support thee." *

COMMENT.

As a mountaineer I have felt that the foregoing passage is an excellent description of a competent rock-climber at work: It is difficult to avoid the impression that Dante had had some experience of rock-scrambling.

H. J. CHAYTOR, St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, England, Author of The Troubadours of Dante.

VIRGIL ENCOURAGES DANTE AGAINST SLOTH AND DECLARES FAME TO BE THE RESULT OF INVINCIBLE STRIVING.

"Omai convien che tu così ti spoltre"
disse 'l maestro; "chè, seggendo in piuma,
in fama non si vien, nè sotto coltre;

* The reader may be interested to learn that only in the lines of Dante could Dr. Achille Ratti, now Pope Pius XI, find words to express the climax of his experiences when in 1889 he, as an Alpine climber, with a companion had the honour of having made the first Italian ascent of Monte Rosa. His article tells us: "The great silence was broken by a rumbling like tremendous thunder. It was an avalanche which detached itself beneath us, but at too great a distance to disturb us, and began to move. Shaken and deafened, we followed the formidable ruin with our ears, unable to do so with our eyes as, ever growing, it fell just as Dante said, with

'Un fracasso d'un suon pien di spavento.' Inf. IX, 65.
(The crash of a sound full of terror.)

until it was stopped on the lower glacier. When silence returned, it seemed to us even more profound and solemn." . . . He concludes his article thus: "It has been my intention to give an account, if possible exact, certainly conscientious, of a particular and concrete case; not to establish general rules. Far be it from me to give other or greater importance to our ascent than a relative or affectionate one, such as may be attributed to amateur climbers; grateful to God for having conceded to me the possibility of admiring close at hand beauties certainly amongst the greatest and most inspiring of this visible world which He has created: glad if we have been able to fill certain perceptible gaps in the chronicles of the Italian Alpine Club. I wish that others may have such a concurrence of favourable circumstances as will procure for them a similar or greater satisfaction, not only with the same safety, but as I believe to be possible, with less inconvenience and difficulty. Difficulties and inconveniences faced with the caution to pass, leaving mind and body refreshed; and an indelible memory of those great and marvellous spectacles, "Che del vederli in me stesso n'esalto" (which to have seen uplifts me within myself) Inf. IV, 120 (Bollettino del C.A.I., vol. XXIII, 1889).

sanza la qual chi sua vita consuma,
cotal vestigio in terra di sè lascia,
qual fummo in aere ed in acqua la schiuma.
E però leva su: vinci l' ambascia
con l' animo che vince ogni battaglia,
se col suo grave corpo non s' accascia.
Più lunga scala convien che si saglia;
non basta da costoro esser partito:
se tu m' intendi, or fa sì che ti vaglia." 46-57

"Now thou must needs thus shake off all sloth" said the Master, "for by sitting down or lying under a coverlet no one attains fame, without which whosoever consumes his life, leaves of himself such vestige on earth, as smoke in the air or foam upon the water. And therefore rise up, conquer thy exhaustion by the spirit which wins every battle, if it be not dragged down by its own heavy body. A longer stairway must be climbed: to have left behind those Hypocrites is not enough: if thou understandest, now act so it may profit thee."

COMMENT.

The Divine Comedy is for us Italians an inexhaustible fountain of quotations, because of the melody of the verses, the force of the concepts, the imaginative evidence of comparisons and the supreme nobility of its precepts. So it is difficult for an Italian who draws upon the poem daily and everywhere, to say exactly just what is his favourite quotation. The one I have given above is among my favourite passages. I believe that it is equal to any of those found in Dante, that inculcate a high moral principle, propose a great example and summarize a noble rule of life.

Ettore Ciccotti, University Professor, and Senator of the Kingdom, Potenza, Italy.

THE FAVOURITE QUOTATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING VICTOR EMMANUEL III.

His Majesty, Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy, graciously acceding to the request of Right Reverend Monsignor John T. Slattery, has been pleased to select the following as his favourite quotation from Dante:

Con l' animo che vince ogni battaglia. (Inf. XXIV, 53)

Virgil to Dante: "Conquer thy exhaustion by *the spirit which wins every battle.*"

and grants the author full permission to publish the same in his forthcoming volume.*

COMMENT.

This verse gives to mankind a most profound lesson. It teaches the only real force which enables man to win every battle of life.

EMANUELE GRAZZI, New York City, Royal Consul General of Italy.

CANTO XXV.

A THIEF'S TORTURE WITH SERPENTS.

Da indi in qua mi fuor le serpi amiche,
perch' una li s' avvolse allora al collo,
come dicesse "Non vo' che più diche:"
E un' altra a le braccia, e rilegollo,
ribadendo se stessa sì dinanzi,
che non potea con esse dare un crollo. 4-9

From that time forth the serpents were my friends: for one of them forthwith coiled itself about his neck, as though it would say 'I will not have thee say more,' and another serpent coiled about his arms and bound them up anew, clinching itself so in front, that he could not even give a shake with them.

COMMENT.

These lines move me very deeply because they make me think of the painful emotion with which Dante wrote them. Expressed, indeed, in them are all the sorrow of the exile and all the torture of one persecuted by unjust cruelty. They tell, furthermore, of the legitimate pride of one who hopes by his own meritorious course of action to conquer finally the opposition of fortune and of men.

* In transmitting this contribution the Minister of the Royal Palace, Count Alessandro Mattiolo Pasqualini, states that his Majesty invariably refused authors similar collaboration. He made an exception in the present case out of special regard for the petitioners.

FERDINANDO MARTINI, Senator of the Kingdom, Monsummano, Italy.

CANTO XXVI.

DANTE'S INVECTIVE AGAINST FLORENCE.

Godi, Fiorenza, poi che se' sì grande,
che per mare e per terra batti l' ali,
e per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande! 1-3

Rejoice, Florence, since thou art so great as to spread thy wings over land and sea, and extend thy name through Hell.

COMMENT.

1—These lines are my favourite because they seem to symbolize precisely what Dante has achieved with his epic.

WILLIAM A. NITZE, Ph.D., professor and head of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Chicago, Ill. Author of The Grail Romance, Perlesvaus.

2—These lines have always moved me deeply by reason of the beautiful vehemence of their sarcasm.

B. H. MOLKENBOER, O.P., Huissen, Holland.

ULYSSES GIVES A THRILLING ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST VOYAGE AND OF HIS DEATH.

"Quando
mi diparti' da Circe, che sottrasse
me più d' un anno là presso a Gaeta,
prima che sì Enea la nomasse,
nè dolcezza di figlio, nè la pieta
del vecchio padre, nè 'l debito amore
lo qual dovea Penelope far lieta,
vincer poter dentro da me l' ardore
ch' i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto,
e de li vizi umani e del valore;
ma misi me per l' alto mare aperto
sol con un legno, e con quella compagna
picciola da la qual non fui diserto.
L' un lito e l' altro vidi infin la Spagna,
fin nel Morrocco, e l' isola de' Sardi,
e l' altre che quel mare intorno bagna.

Io e' compagni eravam vecchi e tardi,
quando venimmo a quella foce stretta
dove Ercule segnò li suoi riguardi,
acciò che l' uom più oltre non si metta:
da la man destra mi lasciai Sibilia,
da l' altra già m' avea lasciata Setta,
"O frati," dissi "che per cento milia
perigli siete giunti a l'occidente,
a questa tanto picciola vigilia
de' nostri sensi ch' è del rimanente,
non vogliate negar l' esperienza,
diretro al sol, del mondo sanza gente.
Considerate la vostra semenza:
fatti non foste a viver come bruti,
ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza."
Li miei compagni fec' io sì aguti,
con questa orazion picciola, al cammino,
che a pena poscia li avrei ritenuti;
e volta nostra poppa nel mattino,
dei remi facemmo ali al folle volo,
sempre acquistando dal lato mancino.
Tutte le stelle già de l' altro polo
vedea la notte, e 'l nostro tanto basso,
che non surgea fuor del marin suolo.
Cinque volte racceso e tante casso
lo lume era di sotto da la luna,
poi che 'ntrati eravam ne l' alto passo,
quando n' apparve una montagna, bruna
per la distanza, e parvemi alta tanto
quanto veduta non avea alcuna.
Noi ci allegrammo, e tosto tornò in pianto;
chè de la nova terra un turbo nacque,
e percosse del legno il primo canto.
Tre volte il fè girar con tutte l' acque;
a la quarta levar la poppa in suso
e la prora ire in giù, com' altrui piacque,
infin che 'l mar fu sopra noi richiuso." 91-142

When I left Circe, who for more than a year had kept me in seclusion near Gaeta before Aeneas thus named it, neither reverence for my aged father nor tenderness for my son nor the love I owed to Penelope to make her happy, could overcome within me the ardour I had to gain experience of the world, and of human virtue and merit. So I put

forth on the deep, open sea in a solitary ship and with that small company that had not deserted me. I saw both shores as far as Spain, Morocco and the island of Sardinia, and the other islands that are bathed by that sea.

I and my companions were old and broken-down when we came to that narrow strait where Hercules set up his bounds to hinder man from venturing farther. On the right hand I had left Seville and on the other already Ceuta when I said: "O brothers, who through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the west, be ye not willing to deny to the brief vigil of your senses that remains, the experience of following the sun to the uninhabited lands to the west. Consider your origin: ye were not created to live like brutes, but to follow after virtue and knowledge." With this brief speech I made my companions so eager for the voyage that hardly afterwards could I have restrained them. And turning our stern to the morning, of our oars we made wings for the mad flight, always gaining on the left. I could now see all the stars of the South Pole at night, while the North Pole was so low that it did not rise above the ocean floor.

Five times had the Moon's light been rekindled upon earth and extinguished as often, since we had entered on the arduous passage, when there appeared to us a mountain, dim with distance, and it seemed to me so exceedingly high as I had never seen before. We rejoiced, but soon our joy was turned into grief; for from that new land there rose a whirlwind and smote upon the forepart of our ship. Three times it whirled her round with all the waters, the fourth time it raised her stern and caused the prow to sink, as was the Will of Another, until the sea closed over us."

COMMENT.

1—Dante thus indicates for the first time the southwest route—that straight line for South America. He also describes Ulysses' crossing the Equator and finally in wonderful verse he prophesies the discovery of the New World, two centuries before his countryman, Columbus.

E. C. Branchi, Ph.D., Head of the Spanish Department in the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va.

2—Here we have the swiftest, strongest, simplest expression in human speech of the indomitable will of man, and then the sudden revelation of the yawning depths that separate the will of man from the will of God. I know of nothing else quite so overwhelming or so tragic in the true sense.

JOHN S. NOLLEN, Ph.D., LL.D., Dean of Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa. Author of Chronology and Practical Bibliography of Modern German Literature.

3—I choose this passage as, perhaps, the noblest tribute to human nature to be found in all poetry and, further, as expressive of the very spirit in which Dante planned, wrote and completed the Divine Comedy—itself, by its mere existence, a standing demonstration of the truth of the words of Ulysses, here quoted.

GEOFFREY L. BECKERSTETH, Glasgow, Scotland. Author of Carducci; Leopardi and Wordsworth.

4—Without the splendid monologue of Ulysses, Tennyson would have had no inspiration for that brief poem of his which plays such a part in the mind and thought of the adolescent student. Through twenty-five years of teaching I have discovered more boys and girls who know and love Tennyson's Ulysses than any other poem of like nature.

AURELIA HENRY REINHARDT, Litt.D., President of Mills College, Oakland, California. Editor (with translation and notes) of The Monarchia of Dante.

5—Neither boldness of thought nor generosity of action was of any avail to Ulysses. His adventure was folly, his effort vain. And yet Dante understands and forcefully makes us feel how much nobility there is even in that folly, how much humanity in that rash intention to penetrate the mystery of the world and of things. He also tells us the greatness of saying to the heart and the mind: "Excelsior," the idea so beautifully versed by Longfellow. Ulysses is the ancient and the modern Argonaut. He is Marco Polo, Columbus or Magellan. Obedient to the mind's passion for truth, he is the discoverer of new lands, of new powers. He is the successor of Prometheus who seems to herald all the audacities, intuitions and inventions of the Renaissance and of the modern times.

ALFREDO GALLETTI, author and critic. Professor at the University of Bologna, Italy.

6—Since the story of this last venture of Ulysses was, so far as we know, not found in classical legend, it was most certainly Dante's own invention, and the marvelous lines in which it is told are a prophecy of the discovery not only of a new material world beyond the unexplored ocean, but also of a new world of thought and action. This passage, in conjunction with those places in the Purgatory where the poet takes his examples, impartially from the Scriptures and from profane history and mythology, of the virtues opposed to the sins punished in that region, marks him both as the great master of thought and expression of the Middle Ages, and as the precursor of the Enlightenment and liberation that were to come with the Pagan Renaissance.

HOMER EDMISTON, Milan, Italy.

7—That is a deathless picture of the passion for discovery and experience, even in the unpeopled land: a picture which animated Dante himself and of which the *Commedia* is a monument. Here it adds lustre and nobility even to the gloom of Hell.

Dante would not have been "The Central Man of All the World" unless, from his Catholic basis, he had been able to reach out by unconscious anticipation, to the Renaissance and to the modern world. In this passage he seems to do this in thrilling and penetrating tones; just as, in another great line, Virgil's parting words to him: "Per ch' io te sovra te corono e mitrio," (Purg. XXVII, 142), he unconsciously foreshadows the self-determination of modern man.

C. H. HERFORD, F.B.A., Litt.D., Professor in the University of Manchester, England. President of the Manchester Dante Society.

8—These lines are nearest to my heart, for the episode of Ulysses seems to me to have the widest application and to be among the most modern passages in the *Commedia*. Ulysses voices, no doubt, Dante's passionate love for and faith in knowledge and thus echoes the confident and moving doctrine of the Schoolmen; and all the same we moderns are not entirely unjustified in detecting an intuition of the value of experiment ("non vogliate negar l'esperienza," 116) and almost

of experimental science. The Middle Ages seem to be setting in a blaze of glory and modern thought seems to proclaim its new programme. Dante speaks out of the fullness of his heart and his words have had and will have a permanent value, for they express with wonderful conciseness and rhythm a permanent truth.

CESARE FOLIGNO, M.A., Professor at Magdalen College, Oxford, England, Author of Dante the Poet.

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

"Fatti non foste a viver come bruti
ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza." 118-120.

"Ye were not created to live like brutes but to follow after virtue and knowledge."

COMMENT.

1—Ulysses says these words to his companions, urging them to undertake the great adventure of discovery. They have always seemed to me particularly beautiful and suited to the greatest of all ventures—the conduct of Life.

COUNTESS IRENE DI ROBILANT, Rome, Italy. Author of Dante, A Guide to Further Study.

2—The lines are nobly humanistic in the richest sense. Those last five words constitute a marvelously compact and inspiring statement of the collegiate ideal.

ERNEST H. WILKINS, Ph.D., LL.D., President of Oberlin College, Ohio. Author of Dante: Poet and Apostle.

3—DR. PAGET TOYNBEE, Burnham, Bucks, England, author of A Dante Dictionary, quotes the passage 118-120 as his favourite and sends this translation of it:

"Bethink you of the seed from which ye grew—
You were not made to live the lives of brutes,
But virtue and high knowledge to pursue."

4—These words of Ulysses taken in connection with the context symbolize a whole philosophy of life. They indicate a

failure to be satisfied with past achievement, however great, as well as with present attainments. In an age when there is a constant urge to seek the easy and that which is likely to bring the greatest material gain, the old warrior points to a path which, while full of obstacles and dangers, is the one that all must follow whose purpose is to benefit mankind.

ROY M. PETERSON, Ph.D., Professor and Head of the Department of Spanish and Italian, University of Maine, Oroni, Maine. Author of The Cults of Campania.

5—These lines are the most familiar to me, in the Sacred Poem. I learned them by heart many years ago. I repeat them almost every day, and find in them something new for my betterment in a dignified and fruitful life. They resound deeply in my ears and conscience, especially when I am tired with the routine of teaching and shortcomings. Their solemn admonition is a strength to me against inconstancy and laziness, a warning against evil, a stimulus to virtue, a prize and consolation in my achievements. I should like to see them written upon the doors of schools and prisons, as a message to the human race from a man who worked and suffered unceasingly.

FRANCESCO LUCIDI, S.T.D., Associate Professor of Moral Theology, Catholic University, Washington, D. C.

THE SPIRITED VOYAGE OF ULYSSES AND HIS CREW.

"Dei remi facemmo ali al folle volo." 125.

"With our oars we made wings for our insensate flight."

COMMENT.

This line which was chosen by his Excellency, Benito Mussolini, Rome, Italy, as his favourite verse, is explained by Francesco Torraca (*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, P. 212) as follows: "The ardour of Ulysses was communicated to his companions who gave to the oars the rapidity of wings. But while the hero recalls not without pleasure, the rapid flight, he also remembers its tragic end, and judges it, as it was, insensate."

CANTO XXVII.

SINCERE CONTRITION NECESSARY FOR ABSOLUTION.

Ch' assolver non si può chi non si pente,
nè pentere e volere insieme puossi
per la contradizion che nol consente. 118-120.

For he who does not repent cannot be absolved, nor is it possible to repent and will (to sin) at the same time, because of the contradiction that allows it not.

COMMENT.

This passage especially appeals to me, for the reason that to know the right and not to do it is the greater sin.

HELEN ZIMMERN, Florence, Italy.

CANTO XXVIII.

CONSCIENCE.

Coscienza m' assicura,
la buona compagnia, che l' uom francheggia
sotto l' asbergo del sentirsi pura. 115-117.

Conscience reassures me, that good companion which fortifies a man under the shield of his self-felt purity.

COMMENT.

The consciousness of our own purity is the shield upon which are blunted the arrows of all the adversities of the times, and the misunderstandings, mockery, persecutions, ire, and ingratitude of man.

Fortified in the spirit we may proceed with all serenity along life's pathway.

ONORIO RUOTOLO, Sculptor of a bust of Dante, Co-editor of Leonardo, New York City.

CANTO XXIX.

CAPOCCHIO TELLS HOW WELL HE COUNTERFEITED NATURE.

"Com' io fui di natura buona sciama." 139

"How good an ape I was of Nature."

COMMENT.

Regarding language as one of the richest gifts of God, separating man from the animal and material creation, I count it joy and duty to cultivate a noble style. How grandly Dante set an example to all generations!

WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D.D., L.H.D., Pulaski, N. Y. Author of In the Mikado's Service; An American in the New Italy.

CANTO XXX.

VIRGIL COUNSELS DANTE AGAINST LISTENING TO IDLE CHATTER.

Chè voler ciò udire è bassa voglia. 148

The wish to hear such things is a base wish.

COMMENT.

To me that passage constantly recurs on account of its wise guidance in the course of ordinary human intercourse.

T. W. ARNOLD, C.I.E., F.B.A., Litt.D., Professor of Arabic, University of London, England.

CANTO XXXIII.

COUNT UGOLINO'S DRAMATIC STORY OF THE IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH OF HIMSELF, HIS TWO SONS AND HIS TWO GRANDSONS IN THE PRISON OF FAMINE.

Dante's Invective Against Pisa.

"Breve pertugio dentro de la muda
la qual per me ha il titol de la fame,
e 'n che conviene ancor ch' altrui si chiuda,

m' avea mostrato per lo suo forame
più lune già, quand' io feci 'l mal sonno
che del futuro mi squarciò il velame.
Questi pareva a me maestro e donno,
cacciando il lupo e i lupicini al monte
per che i Pisan veder Lucca non ponno.
Con cagne magre, studiose e conte,
Gualandi con Sismondi e con Lanfranchi
s' avea messi dinanzi da la fronte.
In picciol corso mi parieno stanchi
lo padre e i figli, e con l' agute scane
mi parea lor veder fender li fianchi.
Quando fui desto innanzi la dimane,
pianger senti' fra 'l sonno i miei figliuoli
ch' eran con meco, e domandar del pane.
Ben se' crudel, se tu già non ti duoli,
pensando ciò che 'l mio cor s' annunziava;
e se non piangi, di che pianger suoli?
Già eran desti, e l' ora s' appressava
che 'l cibo ne solea esser addotto,
e per suo sogno ciascun dubitava;
e io senti' chiavar l' uscio di sotto
a l' orribile torre; ond' io guardai
nel viso a' mie' figliuoi sanza far motto.
Io non piangea, sì dentro impetrai:
piangevan elli; e Anselmuccio mio
disse: 'Tu guardi sì, padre! che hai?'
Perciò non lacrimai nè rispuos' io
tutto quel giorno nè la notte appresso,
infin che l' altro sol nel mondo uscio.
Come un poco di raggio si fu messo
nel doloroso carcere, e io scorsi
per quattro visi il mio aspetto stesso,
ambo le man per lo dolor mi morsi;
ed ei, pensando ch' i' 'l fessi per voglia
di manicar, di subito levorsi,
e disser: 'Padre, assai ci fia men doglia,
se tu mangi di noi: tu ne vestisti
queste misere carni, e tu le spoglia.'
Queta 'mi allor per non farli più tristi:
lo dì e l' altro stemmo tutti muti:
ahi dura terra, perchè non t' apristi?

Poscia che fummo al quarto dì venuti,
Gaddo mi si gettò disteso a' piedi,
dicendo: 'Padre mio, chè non m'aiuti?'
Quivi morì; e come tu mi vedi,
vid' io cascar li tre ad uno ad uno
tra 'l quinto dì e 'l sesto; ond' io mi diedi,
già cieco, a brancolar sovra ciascuno, 23-73

Ahi Pisa, vituperio de le genti
del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona,
poi che i vicini a te punir son lenti,
muovasi la Capraia e la Gorgona,
e faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
sì ch' elli annieghi in te ogni persona!
Che se 'l conte Ugolino aveva voce
d' aver tradita te de le castella,
non dovei tu i figliuoi porre a tal croce.
Innocenti facea l' età novella,
novella Tebe, Uguiccione e 'l Brigata
e li altri due che 'l canto suso appella." 79-90.

"A narrow hole in the tower, called from my fatality, 'The Tower of Famine,' and in which others yet must be shut up, had, through its opening, shown me several moons, when I had that evil dream, which rent aside for me the veil of the future. It seemed to me that this man, Lord and Master, was chasing the wolf and his cubs upon the mountain that prevents the Pisans from seeing Lucca. With hounds lean, keen and well-trained he had put in front of him Gualandi, Sismondi and Lanfranchi. After a short run the parent beast and its young seemed to me weary and to have their flanks torn open by sharp fangs."

"When I awoke, before the dawn, I heard my sons moaning in their sleep and asking for bread. Cruel thou art indeed, if already thou grievest not, at the thought of what my heart was foreboding: and if thou weepest not, at what art thou wont to weep? They were now awake, and the hour was approaching at which food was wont to be brought to us, and each one of us, because of his dream, had misgivings. Then I heard the door below of the horrible tower being locked up; whereupon I looked into the faces of my sons and spoke not a word. I was not weeping. I was turned to stone within me, but they were weeping and my dear little Anselm said: 'Thou lookest so, father, what ails thee?' I shed no tear, however, nor did I answer all that day or the next night, till another sun came forth upon the world."

"When a faint ray had penetrated into the prison of woe and when

I perceived upon their four faces the aspect of my own, I bit my hands for grief. And they, thinking that I did it from desire to eat, suddenly rose up and said: 'Father, it would give us less pain, if thou wouldst eat of us; thou didst clothe us with this wretched flesh, do thou despoil us of it.' I calmed myself then, so as not to make them more sad, and that day and the next we were all mute. Ah, cruel Earth, why didst thou not open? When we had come to the fourth day, Gaddo flung himself outstretched at my feet, saying: 'My father, why dost thou not help me?' Then he died; and even as thou seest me, so did I see the three fall one after another between the fifth and the sixth day; then, already blind, I began to grope among them, and for two days called them after they were dead; then starvation, more effective than grief, did its work."

Ah Pisa! scandal to the people of the fair land where the "Si" is heard, since thy neighbours are slow to punish thee, I would that Caprara and Gorgona might move and make a dam for the Arno at its mouth so that it might drown every living soul of thee. For, if Count Ugolino did betray thee for thy castles, as rumor reports, thou should'st not have put his sons to such torment. Their tender age, thou modern Thebes, made Uguiccione and Brigata guiltless, and the other two whom my song above has named.

COMMENT.

1—The tragic story of Count Ugolino years ago aroused my attention and has ever held my sympathy, both because of our family name and for the intrinsic literary merit of the narrative.

MARIANO UGOLINI, Domestic Prelate to his Holiness, the Pope, and Dean of the Canons of the Basilica of St. Peter, Rome, Italy.

2—This passage has always appealed to me because of its incomparable pathos which Dante portrays so vividly. It is notable for its suppression of details that would detract from the main impression to be produced. The poet describes in a most striking and picturesque manner the two or three incidents that he wishes to stress. A dream has made Ugolino, his sons, and grandsons apprehensive. Then follows the locking of the door of the tower in which they are imprisoned. A further step in the development of the episode is the remarkable way in which Ugolino's inner tumult manifests itself. He is silent, making a striking contrast between the tumult within

and his outward behaviour. To be noted also is the rôle of the children in the grim tragedy and the vivid manner in which their actions are sketched. The ultimate reason why a passage of poetry affects us profoundly is a mystery. In this particular scene, however, there are two or three details that seem to contribute to the result.

Oliver M. Johnston, Ph. D., Professor of Romance Languages, Stanford University, California. Author of Historical Syntax of the Atomic Personal Pronouns in Italian.

3—The verse which has haunted me most relentlessly of late years is that agonized cry of Ugolino which cut straight to the very core of the heart. "E se, non piangi, di che pianger suoli?" (42) (And if thou weepest not, at what art thou wont to weep?) Dante reaches the depth and pervasiveness of that pathos once in *Vita Nuova:* "Morta è la donna tua ch' era sì bella," XXIII l. 143 (Dead is thy lady, she that was so fair), and once in Francesca's "Amor ch' a nullo amato amor perdona" (Inf. V. 103.) (Love which absolves no loved one from loving in return): but the cry which is wrung from Ugolino is more poignant because it is more virile and breaks from a strong paternal heart. Perhaps nothing binds the human family more closely than do its tears; and much of Dante's perennial appeal is due to his intuitive understanding of this. The wrongs which he saw about him and his own personal wrongs, filled him with the pathos of human frailty. We were, he felt, the inevitable victims of great forces which we did not and could not understand, which, like love, conditioned our very existence, and yet seemed to militate against the attainment of the peace which they made us desire.

Albert Edmund Trombly, M.A., Professor of Romance Languages, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo. Author of Rossetti, the Poet.

4—Magnificent is Dante's outburst of indignation against the Republic of Pisa for the crime of condemning to starvation in the "Tower of Hunger" Count of Ugolino, his two sons and two nephews on the innocent charge of his betrayal of Pisa to Florence. The idea of the two well-known islands of Capraia and Gorgona moving up to the mouth of the river

Arno and by blocking it, forcing its flow back to Pisa and drowning every soul, is a conception of masterly originality.

C. Du Riche Preller, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.R.S.E., Edinburgh, Scotland.

CANTO XXXIV.

THE POETS REACH LUCIFER IN THE VERY PIT OF HELL.

"Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*
verso di noi; però dinanzi mira"
disse 'l maestro mio "se tu 'l discerni." 1-3

"'The Banners of the King of Hell' advance toward us," said my Master, "therefore look in front of thee, to see whether thou canst discern him."

COMMENT A AND B.

A—The last canto of the Inferno directs our imagination both to the standard of the Cross by contrasting with the latter, the standard of Lucifer which is the contradiction of the Blessed Trinity, and to the Power of the Cross and of the Empire. The grandiosity of Lucifer in the lowest pit of Hell is a representation never before seen, a majesty ironically opposed to that of the angels and God. With moving irony Lucifer is shown to have six wings; as have the Seraphim. But his wings, as if to portray nullity, produce only shrieking winds and chilling ice. The grandiosity of the place is greater than that of any other part of Hell, because here we have the cruelty and omnipotence of Evil—all that is colossal and gigantic is put forth in a vast, dark vision.

LUCIFER.

Lo 'mperador del doloroso regno
da mezzo il petto uscia fuor de la ghiaccia;
e più con un gigante io mi convegno,

* The Banners of the King Came Forth,"—the sentence is the first line of one of the most stirring hymns in the Catholic Church. It is sung in the procession of Good Friday and is in the Office recited at Passiontide and the feasts of the Finding (3 May), the Exaltation (14 September), the Triumph (16 July) of the Cross. As here adapted by Dante the words signify that the banners (the wings) of Hell's commander, Lucifer, were advancing towards Virgil and himself, a poetic license to express the fact that the Poets were advancing towards Lucifer.

che i giganti non fan con le sue braccia:
vedi oggimai quant' esser dee quel tutto
ch' a così fatta parte si confaccia.
S' el fu sì bello com' elli è or brutto,
e contra 'l suo fattore alzò le ciglia,
ben dee da lui proceder ogni lutto.
Oh quanto parve a me gran meraviglia
quand' io vidi tre facce a la sua testa!
L' una dinanzi, e quella era vermiglia;
l' altr' eran due, che s' aggiugnieno a questa
sovresso 'l mezzo di ciascuna spalla,
e sè giugnieno al luogo de la cresta:
e la destra parea tra bianca e gialla;
la sinistra a vedere era tal, quali
vegnon di là onde 'l Nilo s' avvalla.
Sotto ciascuna uscivan due grand' ali,
quanto si convenia a tanto uccello:
vele di mar non vid' io mai cotali. 28-48.

The Emperor of the Realm of woe from mid-breast issued forth from the ice; and better with a giant do I compare than do giants with his arms. See now how vast must be the whole, which corresponds to such a part. If he were once as fair as he now is hideous, and lifted his head against his Maker, well may all evil come from him. Oh how great a marvel it appeared to me to behold three faces on his head! One was very red, the others were joined on to this above the very middle of each shoulder and all together at the place of the crest; the right seemed betwixt white and yellow and the left looked like those (Ethiopian negroes) who come from the region where the Nile descends. Underneath each face issued forth two mighty wings befitting a bird so vast. Sails of the sea I never saw so broad.

COMMENT.

B—The last solemn verse of this passage seems thus to fall into immensity. And, continues the Poet

E quelle svolazzava
sì che tre venti si movean da ello.
Quindi Cocito tutto s' aggelava:
con sei occhi piangea, e per tre menti
gocciava 'l pianto e sanguinosa bava. 49-54.

And he was flapping the wings so that three winds were stirred by him, and all Cocytus was frozen. With six eyes he was weeping and down three chins trickled the tears and bloody drivel.

ARMANDO SANTANERA, Casale di Monferrato, Italy, University Professor, Author of San Francesco in Dante.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"A wretched and lying parody of Divinity, the ruler of the realm of pain, he has his icy throne at a point which is at once the centre and the bottom of the abyss: around him are graded the nine hierarchies of reprobation; on him rests the entire system of iniquity. Sin and suffering, which are for souls what weight is for bodies, have forced him to the spot which is the very centre of the earth, toward which all heavy masses tend. The general gravitation envelops him, weighs upon him, presses him down on every side: his crime was to wish to draw all creatures to himself: his punishment is, to be crushed under the weight of creation. . . ." In the bold portrait that Dante draws of Lucifer, we cannot help remarking the three faces attributed to him, recalling the triple Hecate of ancient mythology.

A still deeper intention seems to underlie the idea of the three colors given to this triple face, and contrasted to the three colors of the mystic circles whereby later we shall find the Blessed Trinity represented. The commentary of Giacopo di Dante offers on this point a symbolic explanation which, by reason of its originality, seems worthy of notice: "These three faces signify the three impotences pertaining to Lucifer, whence all ills arise, and which are opposite to the three attributes possessed by God. The first attribute which God has is prudence, by which He foresees and co-ordinates all things: in contrast to this, Lucifer has ignorance, that is, he neither knows nor discerns anything; and this is signified by the black face. The second attribute that God has, is love, which made Him make the world, and rule and sustain it: in contrast to this, Lucifer has hatred and envy, by which he corrupts the world and promotes the doing of evil: this is signified by the red face. The third attribute of God is power, by which He rules all things, whether eternal or of this world, as is pleasing to Him, and as reason and justice require; in contrast to this, Lucifer has weakness and powerlessness, that is, he can do nothing . . . and this is signified by the face 'twixt white and yellow.' " Ozanam, Dante and Catholic Philosophy, p. 172.

THE CONCLUDING VERSE OF INFERNO.

E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle. 139.

And thence we came forth to view again the stars.

COMMENT.

1—This verse is very dear to me, but I find it difficult to explain the reason for my preference of it beyond all other verses.

General Umberto Nobile, Rome, Italy, Explorer of the Arctic Region.

2—My favourite quotation from the Commedia is triune, consisting of the last verse of the Inferno, quoted above; the last verse of the Purgatorio, "Pure and disposed to mount unto the stars"; and the last verse of the Paradiso, "Love that moves the sun and the stars."

These lines contain a singularly adequate summary of the entire poem. They offer unlimited material for profound meditation. They indicate the place for the curtain to fall on each of the acts of the drama of life—the life of Dante, the life of every thinking man, the life of the human race. They make philosophy vital, they make psychology real, they impart to the word evolution a meaning worthy of man and his Maker.

Brother Leo, Professor of English in St. Mary's College, Oakland, California. Author of Religion in the Teaching of Literature.

3—In the first place my reason for this choice is because it comprises a magnificent summary of the whole work, the main purpose of which is to indicate man's redemption from the abyss and his consequent elevation to the starry heights. Secondly: this verse discloses the great objective of the life of our intellect, whose task it is to rise from darkness to light. Again it contains an embracing concept of our moral self, as day by day, the Beatrice, whom we all possess, urges us to leave off meanness and its regrets and rise to virtue and its radiant joys. And finally this verse summarizes the life of all human-

kind that, gazing on the pure vision of the heavenly Beatrice, is directed towards ever brighter goals. Is not this verse a symbol of our resurrection? Or better yet, closing as it does the story of the sordid depths of human frailty, is it not a heavenly pledge of our salvation? When sorrow is our portion, let our heart repeat

E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.

H. MATROD, Man-of-letters, Professor, Institute of Saint-Perine, Auteuil, France.

4—The thing which has always most moved me (if one must choose one thing out of many) is the ending of each of the divisions of the Divine Comedy, with that heart-lifting look up towards the stars. I think I have never had a more deeply emotional reaction from anything in literature than when, as quite a young girl, reading the Inferno, I came to the end,

E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.

It was like something lived rather than read. I lifted my head involuntarily, as if looking up out of darkness into light. And to this day the line has power to move me. I don't know how many times it has come into my mind and heart in some dark moment of life, like the promise of something bright to come. Or rather something bright always there.

The ending of the Purgatorio is quieter, more gentle, but infinitely sweet to me,

Puro e disposto a salire a le stelle.

And of course the ending of the Paradiso is all one needs for a creed to live by

L'Amor che mova il sole e l'altre stelle.

It has been, I suppose, a living creed for a great many people.

DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER, Ph.D., Litt.D., Arlington, Vt. Translator from the Italian of Papini's "Christ."

PURGATORIO.

E canterò di quel secondo regno,
dove l' umano spirito si purga
e di salire al ciel diventa degno. I, 4-6.

And I will sing of that second kingdom where the human spirit is purged and becomes worthy to ascend to Heaven.

COMMENT.

This quotation in itself has a profound significance. While I give it as my favourite, I should say that rather the whole Canticle Purgatorio, is my favourite. Reading again these cantos from which the woes of Hell have disappeared, I exclaim: How very countless are the verses there which respond to our most varied and different sentiments! That is so because Dante himself is varied and universal. In this same canto the seventy-first and the seventy-second lines are today living thought for many Italians.

COUNT CARLO SFORZA, Pisa, Italy, Senator of the Kingdom, formerly Minister of Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to France.

PURGATORIO.

CANTO I.

PROEM AND INVOCATION.

Per correr migliori acque alza le vele
omai la navicella del mio ingegno,
che lascia dietro a sè mar sì crudele;
e canterò di quel secondo regno,
dove l' umano spirito si purga
e di salire al ciel diventa degno.
Ma qui la morta poesì resurga,
o sante Muse, poi che vostro sono;
e qui Calliopè alquanto surga,
seguitando il mio canto con quel suono
di cui le Piche misere sentiro
lo colpo tal, che disperar perdono. 1-12.

To course over better waters the little bark of my genius now hoists sail, leaving behind her a sea so cruel; and I will sing of that second kingdom where the human spirit is purged and becomes worthy to ascend to Heaven. But here let dead poesy rise again, O holy Muses, since yours I am and here let Calliope rise a little, accompanying my song with that melody, the stroke of which the wretched Picae felt so deeply that they despaired of pardon.

COMMENT.

1—For the preference of this passage I have no better reason than the high serenity of the mood and the supreme beauty of the language. Perhaps also the passage holds out a permanent hope of emergence from those hells which are made for us, or which we make ourselves.

FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR., L.H.D., Ph.D., Professor of Art, Princeton, N. J. Author of The Portraits of Dante.

2—The glorious opening canto of Purgatorio moves me for its calm loftiness of vision, for a perfection of phrase, of utterance that are incomparable. It gives me the sensation of setting sail across some unknown, yet glorious sea of faith, where doubts and fears, and the inequalities of the flesh are

not—a noble, gradual progress that uplifts, strengthens, gives courage and a fine kind of undefined joy.

EDNA WORTHLEY UNDERWOOD, New York City. Writer and linguist, Author of The Pageant Maker.

THE APPROACH OF DAWN IN ANTE-PURGATORY.

Dolce color d' oriental zaffiro,
che s' accoglieva nel sereno aspetto
del mezzo, puro insino al primo giro,
a gli occhi miei ricominciò diletto,
tosto ch' io usci' fuor de l' aura morta
che m' avea contristati gli occhi e 'l petto.
Lo bel pianeta che d' amar conforta
faceva tutto rider l' oriente. 13-20.

The sweet colour of oriental sapphire which was gathering in the serene aspect of the sky, pure even from the zenith to the horizon, renewed delight to my eyes as soon as I issued forth from the dead air which had afflicted my sight and breast. The beautiful planet which incites to love, was making the whole East to smile.

COMMENT.

1—The foregoing lines are oftenest in my mind, glorifying the aspect of evening and morning star and magically imparting the Poet's sense of deliverance, uplift, recovered and enhanced serenity.

GERTRUDE HALL BROWNELL, New York City. Author of The Wagnerian Romances. Translator of Cyrano de Bergerac and Chantecler.

2—Most interesting does Dante here make the comparison of darkness with light, a light so blue that he describes it as coming forth from the sapphire. The darkness of Inferno was not a darkness such as we experience in the night. It was a smoky, pinkish darkness which had an irritating affect upon the eyes. In the selection given above the Poet makes known in lovely words the relief afforded his eyes and mind when gazing on the beauty of the sky. Great is his joy as he issues forth from the *aura morta* which had afflicted his eyes and

breast. Is it any wonder that he here puts forth a synthesis of light and pure air as a necessary means for the maintenance of human life?

Augustus Ravogli, M.D., Cincinnati, Ohio. Author of The Hygiene of the Skin.

CATO QUESTIONS. VIRGIL ANSWERS AND DISCOURSES UPON DANTE'S JOURNEY.

"Son le leggi d' abisso così rotte?
o è mutato in ciel novo consiglio
che, dannati, venite a le mie grotte?"
Lo duca mio allor mi diè di piglio,
e con parole e con mani e con cenni
reverenti mi fè le gambe e 'l ciglio.
Poscia rispuose lui: "Da me non venni:
donna scese dal ciel, per li cui preghi
de la mia compagnia costui sovvenni.
Ma da ch' è tuo voler che più si spieghi
di nostra condizion com' ell' è vera,
esser non puote il mio che a te si nieghi.
Questi non vide mai l' ultima sera;
ma per la sua follia le fu sì presso,
che molto poco tempo a volger era.
Sì com' io dissi, fui mandato ad esso
per lui campare; e non li era altra via
che questa per la quale i' mi son messo.
Mostrata ho lui tutta la gente ria;
e ora intendo mostrar quelli spirti
che purgan sè sotto la tua balia.
Com' io l' ho tratto, saria lungo a dirti;
de l' alto scende virtù che m' aiuta
conducerlo a vederti e a udirti.
Or ti piaccia gradir la sua venuta:
libertà va cercando, ch' è sì cara,
come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta.
Tu 'l sai, che non ti fu per lei amara
in Utica la morte, ove lasciasti
la vesta ch' al gran dì sarà sì chiara,
Non son li editti etterni per noi guasti;
chè questi vive, e Minòs me non lega;
ma son del cerchio ove son li occhi casti

di Marzia tua, che 'n vista ancor ti priega,
o santo petto, che per tua la tegni;
per lo suo amore adunque a noi ti piega.
Lasciane andar per li tuoi sette regni:
grazie riporterò di te a lei,
se d' esser mentovato là giù degni."
"Marzia piacque tanto a li occhi miei
mentre ch' i' fu' di là" diss' elli allora,
"che quante grazie volse da me, fei.
Or che di là dal mal fiume dimora,
più muover non mi può, per quella legge
che fatta fu quando me n' usci' fora.
Ma se donna del ciel ti move e regge,
come tu di', non c' è mestier lusinghe:
bastisi ben che per lei mi richegge.
Va dunque, e fa che tu costui ricinghe
d' un giunco schietto e che li lavi 'l viso,
sì ch' ogni sucidume quindi stinghe;
chè non si converria, l' occhio sorpriso
d' alcuna nebbia, andar dinanzi al primo
ministro ch' è di quei di paradiso. 45-99.

"Are the laws of the Abyss thus broken, or is there some new degree changed in Heaven that, being damned, ye come to my rocks?" Then did my Leader take hold of me and with words, and with hands and with signs made reverent my legs and my brow. Then he answered Cato: "Of myself I came not. A Lady descended from Heaven, at whose prayers I succoured this man with my company. But since it is thy will that more should be unfolded of our condition, what it really is, it cannot be my (will) to deny thee. This man (Dante) has not seen his last evening, but, through his own folly, was so near it that very little time there was to turn. As I have said, I was sent to rescue him, and there was no other way than this to which I have betaken myself. I have shown him all the guilty people and now I purpose to show him those spirits that are purging themselves under thy charge. How I have led him would be too long to tell thee; from on high, power is descending that aids me in guiding him to see thee and to hear thee."

"Now may it please thee to approve his coming. He goes in search of liberty which is so precious, as he knows who, for the sake of it, gives up his life. Thou knowest it since, for the sake of it, death was not bitter to thee in Utica where thou didst lay aside the raiment that, on the great day, shall be so bright. The eternal decrees have not been violated by us, as this man is alive and Minos does not bind me

but I am of the circle where dwell the chaste eyes of thy Marcia who, in her looks, still prays thee, O sacred breast, that thou wouldst hold her for thine own: for love of her then incline thyself to us. Allow us to pass through thy seven realms. Thanks unto thee I will bear back to her if, to be mentioned there below, thou deign."

"Marcia," said he thereupon, "was so pleasing to mine eyes while I was yonder that as many favours as she desired from me, I performed; now that she dwells on the other side of the evil stream, she can no longer move me in comformity to that law which was made when thence I issued forth. But if, as thou sayest, a Lady from Heaven is moving and directing thee, there is no need of flattering speech, let it be quite sufficient that in her name thou askest me. Go then and see that thou gird this man with a smooth rush and that thou wash his face so that thou remove all foulness from it, for it would not be fitting to go with eyes dimmed by any mist before the first minister of those that are in Paradise.

COMMENT A AND B.

A—As one who traces his forebears from Ravenna, whither they removed to Venice in 1275, in the days when the star of Guido Novello da Polenta was in the ascendant, I welcome the invitation to contribute my favourite quotation from Dante. Alas, they are so many that I almost shrink from a task, to fulfill which I must lay bare the very frailties of the human heart. The lines quoted appeal to me because they reflect a period in the life of a man whom I have known from infancy. Other lines also come to mind.

VIRGIL REPROVES DANTE FOR TARRYING.

Io era già da quell' ombre partito,
e seguitava l' orme del mio duca,
quando di retro a me, drizzando il dito,
una gridò: "Ve' che non par che luca
lo raggio da sinistra a quel di sotto,
e come vivo par che si conduca!"
Gli occhi rivolsi al suon di questo motto,
e vidile guardar per maraviglia
pur me, pur me, e 'l lume ch' era rotto.
"Perchè l' animo tuo tanto s' impiglia."
disse 'l maestro, "che l' andare allenti?
che ti fa ciò che quivi si pispiglia?

Vien dietro a me, e lascia dir le genti:
sta come torre ferma che non crolla
già mai la cima per soffiar de' venti;
chè sempre l' uomo in cui pensier rampolla
sovra pensier, da sè dilunga il segno,
perchè la foga l' un dell' altro insolla."
Che potea io ridir, se non 'Io vegno'?
Dissilo, alquanto del color consperso
che fa l' uom di perdon tal volta degno. Purg. V 1-21.

I had already departed from those shades and was following my Leader's steps when one behind me, pointing his finger, called out: "Look, the ray does not seem to shine on the left hand of that lower one, and he appears to behave himself as though he were alive." I turned my eyes at the sound of those words and saw them gazing in wonder at me, at me alone, and the light that was broken. "Why is thy mind so entangled?" said the Master, "that thy pace is slackening? What imports it to thee what is whispered here? Follow me and let the people talk. Stand like a firm tower, the summit of which is never shaken by blast of winds, for always the man in whom thought on thought wells up, removes from himself his aim, for the force of one thought weakens that of the other." What could I answer but "I come"? I said it somewhat suffused with that colour which, at times, makes a man worthy of pardon.

COMMENT.

B—Two short years ago the man was led through "the valley of the Shadow." As he lay in the hospital wondering what more use the good Lord might or might not have for him, thoughts of his mother, who had died when he was a child, frequently came to him—so frequently that he even prayed she would call him home. She was *his* "Lady from Heaven," and *his* Guide was the gentle kindly heart, who led him through "the valley" to the summit of the mountain to find a terrestrial paradise.

Frank H. Vizetelly, LL.D., New York City. Editor of the Standard Dictionary. Author of Essentials of English Speech and Literature.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"Virgil's speech to the venerable Cato is a perfect specimen of persuasive eloquence. The sense of personal dignity is here

combined with extreme courtesy and respect, and the most flattering appeals to the old man's well-known sentiments; his love of liberty, his love of rectitude, and his devoted attachment to Marcia, are interwoven with irresistible art." H. C. BARLOW, *Critical, historical and philosophical Contributions to the Divina Commedia,* London, 1864.

LIBERTY.

Libertà va cercando, ch' è sì cara,
come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta. 71-72.

He goes in search of liberty, which is so precious, as he knows, who for the sake of it, gives up his life.

COMMENT.

1—Liberty is man's most precious possession. I know of nothing more worthy to strive after than liberty. Without liberty life is not worth the living. I have always cherished an intense admiration of those who have sacrificed their lives for the sake of liberty.

MORITZ LEVI, Ann Arbor, Mich. Professor of French, University of Michigan. Editor of I Promessi Sposi.

2—I first used this quotation in a booklet published at the time of the campaign for the First Liberty Loan Bonds, to which campaign the citizens of Pittsfield, of Italian origin, responded admirably. The quotation is a favourite with me because, in my opinion, liberty is the best asset of life.

GIUSEPPE FACCIOLI, Pittsfield, Mass. Associate Manager of the General Electric Company.

3—Virgil, with word and gesture, commands Dante to kneel down before the noble soul of Cato and ask permission to visit Purgatory.

This favour he implores in the name of that liberty Dante himself sought, the liberty by which, from a wild forest of vice, one soars to the luminous heights of perfection, to the very Divinity: the liberty that rises from beastly impulses to noble motives of superior ethics suggested by the categorical imperative of duty: the liberty that animates conscience illumi-

nated by the light of absolute divine perfection. It leads one to the heroic morality of sacrifice for high ideals, to the high ethical sense of which Cato was so glorious an example.

Ludovico Fulci, University Professor and Senator of the Kingdom. Messina, Italy.

DAWN AND THE SHIMMERING OF THE SEA.

L' alba vinceva l' ora mattutina,
che fuggia innanzi, sì che di lontano
conobbi il tremolar de la marina. 115-117.

The dawn was dispelling the morning hour which fled before her, so that, from afar, I discerned the shimmering of the sea.

COMMENT.

1—This passage and the complementary lines, Purg. II. 17, 18 appeal to me by reason of their intense beauty of description and suggestion. The breaking light and the faint breeze of dawn and the shimmering surface of water stretching away to the horizon convey almost sensibly the stillness and peace of Purgatory after the horrors of Hell, and suggest the hopeful beginning of a new life. The rapid approach of the angel-light is the first wonderful revelation of that hope.

Mary Ryan, M.A., University College, Cork, Ireland.

2—Who does not admire, especially for its mystical merit, the verse,

"Conobbi il tremolar de la marina?"

Here the last words with their frequent repetition of the letter *a*, produce a sense of light and the *r*, thrice used, gives the impression of the agitation of trembling. Two other passages here suggest themselves for their interesting rhetorical figure of onomatopoeia. Who does not admire

"Quale ne' plenilunii sereni?" (Par. XXIII, 25)

As in the calm full-mooned skies.

The diæresis in *plenilunii* conveys the sustained impression of charming, sublunar repose.

But there is another verse which few persons remember, that, to me, seems absolutely marvelous, by reason of its sound. Fear, as everyone knows, produces in man different effects from different causes. The fear of phantoms or of apparitions of the dead, for instance, causes anguish and suffocation. With that fact in mind Dante alludes to the crucified Christ who appears to two of His disciples on their way to Emmaus, and says

Già *s*u*r*to f*u*o*r* de la sep*u*lcral b*u*ca. Purg XXI, 9.

(Already risen from the mouth of the tomb.) The letter *u* employed four times produces a funereal tone, and anguish and suffocation come from the syllables ending in consonants, as if they were truncated words.

Già sur | to fuor | de la sepul | cral | buca.

Corrado Ricci, Senator of the Kingdom. Rome, Italy. Author of La Divina Commedia; Ore ed Ombre Dantesche.

3—Living in Italy, and studying Dante on his home ground, I came to see him in a new light, not the teacher and philosopher alone, concerned solely with the profundities of the soul, but also the man of simple life and simple loves, who knew and sang of the comings and goings of the goatherd, the vineyardist, the sailor, the housewife; who remembered the ways of his infancy, marked the lowliest things of creation around him, even to the tiny heart-beat of the mother bird in her nest, and was touched to the soul, over and over again, by the beauties of earth and sky and sea, stirred, as all men are stirred, by the wonder of the elements. It was then that I came to know Dante really as a poet, a poet of the earth as well as of the stars; and because it is in this aspect that I have grown to love him most, and because I devote myself now to revealing him as best I can to others, in this aspect—because of all this I have come, more and more, to find my favourite and most memorable quotations among his lyrical passages; such passages as those which conclude each canto, concerning the stars, such passages as that quoted above.

Charles Phillips, M.A., Notre Dame, Ind. Professor of English, University of Notre Dame. Author of The New Poland.

CANTO II.

THE ANGEL-PILOT BRINGS SOULS TO PURGATORY.

Noi eravam lunghesso mare ancora,
come gente che pensa a suo cammino,
che va col cuore e col corpo dimora.
Ed ecco qual, sul presso del mattino,
per li grossi vapor Marte rosseggia
giù nel ponente sovra 'l suol marino,
cotal m' apparve, s' io ancor lo veggia,
un lume per lo mar venir sì ratto,
che 'l mover suo nessun volar pareggia.
Dal qual com' io un poco ebbi ritratto
l' occhio per domandar lo duca mio,
rividil più lucente e maggior fatto.
Poi d' ogne lato ad esso m' appario
un non sapea che bianco, e di sotto
a poco a poco un altro a lui uscio.
Lo mio maestro ancor non fece motto,
mentre che i primi bianchi apparser ali:
allor che ben conobbe il galeotto,
gridò: "Fa, fa che le ginocchia cali:
ecco l' angel di Dio: piega le mani:
omai vedrai di sì fatti officiali.
Vedi che sdegna li argomenti umani,
sì che remo non vuol nè altro velo
che l' ali sue tra liti sì lontani.
Vedi come l' ha dritte verso il cielo,
trattando l' aere con l' etterne penne,
che non si mutan come mortal pelo."
Poi, come più e più verso noi venne
l' uccel divino, più chiaro appariva;
per che l' occhio da presso nol sostenne,
ma chinail giuso; e quei sen venne a riva
con un vasello snelletto e leggiero,
tanto che l' acqua nulla ne 'nghiottiva.
Da poppa stava il celestial nocchiero,
tal che parea beato per iscripto;
e più di cento spirti entro sediero.
"In exitu Israel de Egypto"
cantavan tutti insieme ad una voce
con quanto di quel salmo è poscia scripto.

Poi fece il segno lor di santa croce;
ond' ei si gittar tutti in su la piaggia:
ed el sen gì, come venne, veloce. 10-51.

We were still alongside the sea, like persons with thoughts on their journey, who travel with the spirit, but with the body linger, and lo, as at the approach of the morning, through the dense vapours Mars glows fiery red in the west above the ocean flow, so appeared to me—so may I again behold the sight!— a light coming o'er the sea so swiftly that no flight could compare with it in rapidity of motion. When I withdraw my eyes away from it, for a moment, to inquire of my Guide, I saw it again increased in brilliancy and in size. Then, on each side of it, appeared to me a something white; and, from beneath, there loomed out another whiteness, still my Master spoke no word until the first whiteness appeared as wings, then, when he fully recognized the pilot, he cried: "Fall at once on thy knees and fold thy hands, behold! the Angel of God: henceforth thou shalt see such Ministers. See how he scorns all human instruments, so that oar he desires not, nor other sail than his own wings between shores so distant. See how he holds his wings straight toward Heaven, beating the air with those eternal feathers that are not changed, like mortal hair."

Then, as nearer and nearer the Divine Bird drew on toward us, the brighter he appeared; so that my eye endured him not near, but I bent my gaze downward; and he came on to the shore with a small vessel, so swift and light that no waters could in any way draw it in. At the stern stood the celestial pilot in an attitude that made him appear with blessedness inscribed, and more than a hundred spirits sat within. They all were singing together with one voice, *In exitu Israel de Egypto,* with what is after written. Then he made on them the sign of the holy cross, whereupon they cast themselves upon the shore, and, swiftly as he came, he went his way.

COMMENT.

These lines are my favourite ones: I should say that the whole Canto is my favourite selection because here is expressed, with admirable profundity, the great theological virtue of Hope. And in what a dazzling form is it presented to us!

ADOLPHE RETTÉ, man of letters, Beaune (Cote-d'Or), France.

2—Reasons for preference of this passage: perfect specimen of descriptive poetry; graceful forms and motions, splen-

dour of light, saintliness and majesty of the heavenly steersman eliciting Dante's reverence. Lightness of bark propelled only by Angel's wings and drinking no wave, though freighted by more than a hundred spirits. Contrast Charon's boatful of doomed shades. . . . This beautiful scene introducing departed souls eager to undergo their purification, their tearful eyes beaming with hope in God's mercy, is a distinct relief after Inferno's lurid circles of desperate misery, and a fitting introduction to the ascent of the ledges, leading up to the recovered Eden, whence the purified spirits will wing their flight amid the stars to the very Empyrean: God's beatifying presence.

E. L. Rivard, C.S.V., Ph.D., D.D., Jette-Saint-Pierre, Belgium. Author of Views on Dante

DANTE AND THE SINGER CASELLA.

Io vidi una di lor trarresi avante
per abbracciarmi, con sì grande affetto,
che mosse me a fare il simigliante.
Oi ombre vane, fuor che ne l' aspetto!
tre volte dietro a lei le mani avvinsi,
e tante mi tornai con esse al petto.
Di maraviglia, credo, mi dipinsi;
per che l' ombra sorrise e si ritrasse,
e io, seguendo lei, oltre mi pinsi.
Soavemente disse ch' io posasse:
allor conobbi chi era, e pregai
che, per parlarmi, un poco s' arrestasse.
Rispuosemi: "Così com' io t' amai
nel mortal corpo, così t' amo sciolta:
però m' arresto; ma tu perchè vai?"
"Casella mio, per tornar altra volta
là dov' io son, fo io questo viaggio"
diss' io; "ma a te com' è tanta ora tolta?"
Ed elli a me: "Nessun m' è fatto oltraggio,
se quei che leva quando e cui li piace,
più volte m' ha negato esto passaggio;
chè di giusto voler lo suo si face:
veramente da tre mesi elli ha tolto
chi ha voluto intrar, con tutta pace.

Ond' io, ch' era ora a la marina volto
dove l' acqua di Tevero s' insala,
benignamente fu' da lui ricolto.
A quella foce ha elli or dritta l' ala,
però che sempre quivi si ricoglie
quale verso Acheronte non si cala."
E io: "Se nuova legge non ti toglie
memoria o uso a l' amoroso canto,
che mi solea quetar tutte mie voglie,
di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto
l' anima mia, che, con la mia persona
venendo qui, è affannata tanto!"
"Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona"
cominciò elli allor sì dolcemente,
che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona.
Lo mio maestro e io e quella gente
ch' eran con lui parevan sì contenti,
come a nessun toccasse altro la mente. 76-117

I saw one of them draw forward to embrace me with so great affection that it moved me to do the like. O Shades empty of all save in aspect, three times I clasped my hands behind him, and as often returned them to my breast. I suppose that I changed colour from wonderment, for the shade smiled and drew back and I following him, pressed forward. Gently he bade me desist; I knew then who he was and I besought him to stay a while and speak to me. He answered me: "Even as I loved thee in the mortal body, so do I love thee freed; for that reason I stay; but why art thou going?" "O my Casella," I said, "I am making this journey that I may return here again; but how has so much time been taken from thee?" * And he replied "No wrong is done to me if He who bears away when and whom He pleases has many times denied me this passage, for His will is founded in justice. Truly, for three months, He has taken, in all peace, whoever has wished to enter. Wherefore I, who had in that time betaken me to the seashore where the waters of the Tiber become salt, was by Him gra-

* "According to the Poet, they who die reconciled to God, in order to pass to Purgatory, assemble at the mouth of the Tiber; but the Angel, destined to transport them in his bark, takes those whom he will, first; and, at his discretion, leaves others for a later time. Casella had been denied a passage several times, but at last, at the time of the Jubilee, the Angel having granted the favour to whoever asked it of him, took him also on board, as he stood gazing earnestly at the sea. The fiction of the delay is taken from mythology, where it is admitted that souls are more or less delayed on the banks of the Styx before being ferried over to the other bank, towards which they eagerly stretch their hands." Quoted by W. W. Vernon *Readings on the Purgatorio,* vol. I, p. 66.

ciously gathered in. To that river's mouth He has directed His wing, for those who do not sink down to Acheron are always gathering there."

And I said to him: "If no new law deprives thee of the memory or the practice of that song of love which used to calm my every desire, please to comfort with it this soul of mine which, coming hither with its mortal body, is so much distressed."

"Love that discourses to me in my mind," he then began so sweetly, that the sweetness of the song still lingers with me. My Master and I and the throng with Casella, seemed so full of delight as if naught else occupied the mind of any one of us."

COMMENT.

1—Who but the "Divino Poeta" could so exquisitely have described the power of music taking possession of us in such a mysterious and all-absorbing way?

MARCELLA SEMBRICH, Operatic Soprano, New York City.

2—It is almost impossible to narrow one's choice to a single favourite passage from the Divine Comedy. But I think that I should, perhaps, fix on the foregoing because of its dramatic situation and poignant beauty of sentiment. There is a profoundly moving quality in the general scene—the group of souls, fresh in relief and wonder after the still vividly remembered death agony, clustered joyfully together in the bright morning light. And even more unspeakably touching is the specific incident—the spirit-singer's fidelity to a youthful affection, and the sound, uplifted on that unearthly shore, of beloved mortal music.

HELEN ROSE BALFE, Wilkinsburg, Pa.

3—My choice limits itself only with regret, and, even in this canto, I can detach, by constraint only, the passage: "At the stern stood the celestial pilot" down to line fifty-one. Even with these lines detached I hear the other verses still singing most charmingly. What moves me, in any case, in this second canto is the accord, more perceptible and profound than anywhere else, between the nobly human sense of the Poet and his admirable grasp of the supernatural. Those souls landing on the shores of the Hereafter, half awakened from their earthly dream, the great Angel, the Divine Bird, who has transported them in his imponderable bark, their chanting the

psalm *In exitu,* the epic of earth's ended exile, and suddenly the appearance, among those souls destined for suffering and joy, of the intimate friend, Casella, the musician, whom Dante vainly tries to embrace with his arms of flesh—all this forms an ensemble, the inexpressible beauty of which will never weary me.

CHARLES GROLLEAU, Man-of-Letters, Paris, France. Secretary of the *Bulletin des Ecrivains Catholiques.*

CANTO III.

THE VALUE OF TIME.

"Chè perder tempo a chi più sa più spiace" 78

"For loss of time most displeaseth him who knoweth most."

COMMENT.

One can readily recall more beautiful lines in Dante; but upon reflection I have chosen the words here uttered by Virgil, because they follow a request for knowledge and are finely appreciative of the value of what so many human beings waste, like prodigals, for themselves and others—time, which no man can restore.

J. WIGHT DUFF, M.A., D.Litt. (Oxon.) LL.D., Professor of Classics, Armstrong College (University of Durham), Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

THE SOULS OF SUCH AS DIED IN CONTUMACY AGAINST THE CHURCH. AN ACT OF PERFECT CONTRITION SECURES SALVATION FOR KING MANFRED WHO WAS UNDER THE BAN OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

Io mi volsi ver lui e guardail fiso:
biondo era e bello e di gentile aspetto,
ma l' un de' cigli un colpo avea diviso.
Quand' i' mi fui umilmente disdetto
d' averlo visto mai, el disse: "Or vedi";
e mostrommi una piaga a sommo 'l petto.
Poi sorridendo disse: "Io son Manfredi,
nepote di Costanza imperadrice;
ond' io ti priego che quando tu riedi,

vadi a mia bella figlia, genitrice
de l' onor di Cicilia e d' Aragona,
e dichi il vero a lei, s' altro si dice.
Poscia ch' io ebbi rotta la persona
di due punte mortali, io mi rendei,
piangendo, a quei che volontier perdona.
Orribil furon li peccati miei;
ma la bontà infinita ha sì gran braccia,
che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei.
Se 'l pastor di Cosenza, che a la caccia
di me fu messo per Clemente allora,
avesse in Dio ben letta questa faccia,
l' ossa del corpo mio sarieno ancora
in co del ponte presso a Benevento,
sotto la guardia de la grave mora.
Or le bagna la pioggia e move il vento
di fuor dal regno, quasi lungo il Verde,
dov' ei le trasmutò a lume spento.
Per lor maladizion sì non si perde,
che non possa tornar l' etterno amore,
mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde.
Vero è che quale in contumacia more
di Santa Chiesa, ancor ch' al fin si penta,
star li convien da questa ripa in fore,
per ogni tempo ch' elli è stato, trenta,
in sua presunzion, se tal decreto
più corto per buon prieghi non diventa.
Vedi oggimai se tu mi puoi far lieto,
revelando a la mia buona Costanza
come m' hai visto, e anche esto divieto;
chè qui per quei di là molto s' avanza." 106-145.

I turned me round towards him and looked at him attentively: blond was he and handsome and of noble mien, but a sword-cut had cleft one of his eyebrows. When I humbly had disclaimed ever to have seen him, he said: "Now look": and he showed me a wound in the upper part of his breast. Then with a smile he said, "I am Manfred, grandson of the Empress Constance: wherefore I pray thee that, when thou returnest, thou go to my beautiful daughter, mother of the honour of Sicily and of Aragon and tell the truth to her, if other tale be told. After I had my body pierced by two mortal stabs, I surrendered myself, weeping, to Him who willingly doth pardon. My transgressions had been horrible but infinite Goodness hath arms so wide that it embraces

all that turn to it. If the Pastor of Cosenza * who was sent by Clement to hunt me down, had then rightly read this page of God's (mercy), the bones of my body would still be resting at the bridge-head at Benevento, under the shelter of the heavy cairn."

"Now the rain drenches them and the wind moves them forth from the kingdom, almost along the Verde, whither he transferred them with extinguished tapers. By canonical censure man is not so wholly lost that the eternal love of God may not return so long as hope hath speck of green. True it is, that he who dies in contumacy of Holy Church, even though he repent at his last hour, needs must stay outside,† upon this bank thirty times as long as each period that he remained in his presumption, unless such decree becomes shortened by holy intercessory prayer.‡ See now if thou canst make me glad by revealing to my good Constance in what condition thou hast seen me and also let her know of this prohibition; for here, from those in yonder world, much benefit is derived."

COMMENT.

1—These are the words of the ill-fated Manfred, son of the Emperor Frederic II, slain at the battle of Benevento in 1266, whom Dante finds in the Ante-Purgatory among those who repented in the hour of death. Like his father, whose soul is in Hell among the Heretics, he had been excommunicated by the Church, which refused Christian burial to his body; but, after receiving his mortal wound, he had, according to Dante, found time for repentance. Those who accuse Dante, and his theology, of a savage sternness, might do well to ponder such lines as these, and to remember that the poet of Hell is also the poet of Purgatory and Paradise who could say of Hell itself that it was made by "Primal Love"—that "Goodness Infinite" which seeks to save even the worst of sinners so long as the immortal soul animates the mortal body.

* Tommasco d'Agni da Lentini, Archbishop of Cosenza, by order of the Pope, Clement IV disinterred the body of Manfred from his grave near Benevento and threw it unburied, as the body of one excommunicated, on the bank of the Verde.

† Outside the gate of Purgatory.

‡ The Catholic Church has defined that the souls in Purgatory are helped by the suffrages of the faithful. The conception put forth in *Purgatorio,* as to the kind of purification and its duration imposed on the souls in Purgatory before they attain eternal life, is Dante's own creation.

HERBERT H. YEAMES, Ph.D., Professor of Greek and Latin Literature in Hobart College, Geneva, N. Y. Author of Pilgrim Sonnets.

2—I have always been especially attracted to this passage describing Dante's meeting with Manfred, once King of Sicily and of Aragon. He was an ancestor of my deceased husband whose mother was Branca Lanza or Lanzia, as the name was spelt in the twelfth century. The Lanzas have always been very proud of having had one of the founders of their family mentioned in the Divine Comedy. While Manfred was certainly a very bad man, it has been gratifying to his descendents that Dante placed him in Purgatory and not in Hell. Manfred, after introducing himself, says "Orribal fueron li peccati miei," (My transgressions had been horrible;) then adds this exquisite and wonderfully consoling sentence: "Ma la bontà infinita ha sì gran braccia che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei." (But infinite Goodness hath arms so wide that it embraces all that turn to it.) That, to me, has always stood out over and above all else in this greatest of great poems, for it embodies God's love and mercy and fatherhood in a few words and brings the certainty of consolation and forgiveness to the worst sinners.

MARQUISE CLARA LANZA, New York City. Author of A Dweller on the Borderland.

3—The two lines beginning, "Ma la bontà infinita," seem to me almost a loftier word of praise of divine Love than some of the oftener quoted ones. The passage is one of the most consoling words of the whole Divine Comedy.

MARY V. YOUNG, Ph.D., Professor of Romance Languages, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass. Author of Italian Grammar.

CANTO IV.

THE PASSING OF TIME.

Vassene il tempo, e l'uom non se n' avvede. 9

The time passes by, and the man observes it not.

COMMENT.

This quotation has been in my mind almost all my life and it has spurred me unto work whenever I felt that something was slackening up. Long ago I undertook to list every quotation from the *Divina Commedia,* which directly or indirectly related to music. Such a compilation, if complete, would be interesting, useful and inspiring to composers, especially for contrast for music colours. In his *Dante Symphony,* Liszt has certainly treasured much of "the longing of the soul" inspired by the Purgatorio, and even more of the sublime ideality emanating from the Paradiso. The same Dantean influence can be traced, also, in Liszt's magnificent Oratorio, *Christus.*

PIETRO FLORIDIA (hereditary Baron Napolino), Composer and pianist, New York City. Author of grand opera, Paoletta.

DANTE LIKENS THE ENTRANCE INTO ANTE-PURGATORY TO THE PRECIPITOUS ASCENTS ALONG THE ITALIAN RIVIERA.

Vassi in Sanleo e discendesi in Noli,
montasi su 'n Bismantova e in Caccume
con esso i piè; ma qui convien ch' om voli. 25-27.

One goes to San Leo, and descends to Noli, one clambers up to Bismantova and to Caccume, with one's feet alone, but here a man must fly.

COMMENT.

On reaching Noli and other places in Liguria I dipped into Cary's translation to find references to the beautiful landscapes through which Dante undoubtedly wandered and I came to the conclusion (as one can read in my "Wanderings on the Italian Riviera"), that "a visit to the shores of the Ligurian sea is an essential part of the education of every student of Dante." At any rate, the power of some of the descriptions in the "Divine Comedy" is certainly made clearer by personal inspection of these rugged, pine-clad cliffs along whose sides, high above the sea, wind the narrow, steep paths of the "contadini" and their mules.

G. FREDERIC LEES, Paris, France. Manager of The Parisian Fashion News Service.

CANTO V.

CONSTANCY.

"Sta come torre ferma che non crolla
già mai la cima per soffiar de' venti." 14-15.

Stand like a firm tower which never rocks its summit with the blowing of the winds.

COMMENT.

I have chosen these lines as my favourite selection because, although in the text they are an admonition addressed by Virgil to Dante, they so clearly indicate the predominant trait of Dante's own character; at the same time time they express a principle of universal application.

KENNETH MCKENZIE, Ph.D., Professor of Italian, Princeton University, Princeton, N. J. Author of Symmetrical Structure of Dante's Vita Nuova.

CONSECRATION TO DUTY.

"Però pur va ed in andando ascolta." 45.

So still go onward, and, in going, listen.

COMMENT.

The line is chosen because solving the greatest enigma of the ethical life: the apparent conflict between self-realization and service of others. Dante shows that the two aims are one aim—there is no true culture without service; and all sound service involves the realization of one's ideal self. Each must climb his own mountain and get as near the top as possible: that is why we are in this world: but let no one try to go up alone. If others will stumble to their feet and strive to climb, lend a hand by the way. The true service is, not making others comfortable in lazy dependence, but helping them to climb up toward becoming the men and women God meant them to be.

"So still go onward, and, in going, listen," is to me the highest point of medieval ethical teaching, perhaps of all the ethical teaching in the world.

EDWARD HOWARD GRIGGS, Litt.D., L.H.D., LL.D. Author and lecturer. Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y.

THE DEATH OF JACOPO DEL CASSERO.

"E lì vid' io
de le mie vene farsi in terra laco." 83-84.

And there I saw a lake growing on the ground from my veins.

COMMENT.

This is not one of the most quoted passages from the *Divina Commedia*. Still it always occurs to me when I hear or read of some murderous deed. The episode of Jacopo Del Cassero, pursued by hired assassins and overtaken in a mire, could not be concluded with more impressive conciseness. We can see the man bleeding to death and, in the consciousness of despair, feeling his life streaming out with his blood.

It is one of the three episodes of violent death that Dante draws on the peaceful background of Ante-Purgatory: the other two being the ghastly sight of Buonconte's body flung about by the stormy river after the battle of Campaldino, and the lamentable story of Pia De' Tolomei summed up in three sentences.

The above-mentioned passage is an instance of Dante's intensity of vision and power of language owing to which he can sketch a scene with one stroke of his pen or suggest a tragedy with a line.

LAURA TORRETTA, Ph.D., Milan, Italy.

BUONCONTE DA MONTEFELTRO, WHO FELL IN BATTLE, TELLS BOTH THE STRUGGLE OF AN ANGEL AND THE DEVIL FOR HIS SOUL, AND THE FATE OF HIS BODY.

Io fui da Montefeltro, io son Bonconte:
Giovanna o altri non ha di me cura;
per ch' io vo tra costor con bassa fronte."
E io a lui: "Qual forza o qual ventura
ti traviò sì fuor di Campaldino,
che non si seppe mai tua sepultura?"

"Oh!" rispuos' elli, "a piè del Casentino
traversa un' acqua c' ha nome l' Archiano,
che sovra l' Ermo nasce in Apennino.
Là 've 'l vocabol suo diventa vano,
arriva' io, forato ne la gola,
fuggendo a piede e 'nsanguinando il piano.
Quivi perdei la vista e la parola;
nel nome di Maria fini', e quivi
caddi e rimase la mia carne sola.
Io dirò vero e tu 'l ridì tra' vivi:
l' angel di Dio mi prese, e quel d' inferno
gridava: 'O tu del ciel, perchè mi privi?
Tu te ne porti di costui l' etterno
per una lacrimetta che 'l mi toglie;
ma io farò de l' altro altro governo!'
Ben sai come ne l' aere si raccoglie
quell' umido vapor che in acqua riede,
tosto che sale dove 'l freddo il coglie.
Giunse quel mal voler che pur mal chiede
con lo 'ntelletto, e mosse il fummo e 'l vento
per la virtù che sua natura diede.
Indi la valle, come 'l dì fu spento,
da Pratomagno al gran giogo coperse
di nebbia; e 'l ciel di sopra fece intento,
sì che 'l pregno aere in acqua si converse:
la pioggia cadde ed a 'fossati venne
di lei ciò che la terra non sofferse;
e come ai rivi grandi si convenne,
ver lo fiume real tanto veloce
si ruinò, che nulla la ritenne.
Lo corpo mio gelato in su la foce
trovò l' Archian rubesto; e quel sospinse
ne l' Arno e sciolse al mio petto la croce
ch' i' fe' di me, quando 'l dolor mi vinse:
voltommi per le ripe e per lo fondo;
poi di sua preda mi coperse e cinse." 88-129.

"I was a Di Montefeltro, I am Buonconte. Giovanna, nor any other hath care of me; therefore must I go among these spirits, with downcast brow." And I to him: "What violence or what chance so carried thee astray from Campaldino, that thy burial place was never known?" "Oh," answered he, "at the foot of the Casentino crosses a stream named the Archiano, which rises in the Apennine above the Hermitage. There

where its name comes to an end (because there it flows into the Arno) I arrived, pierced in the throat, fleeing away on foot, and staining the plain with my blood. There I lost my sight and I ended my speech with the name of Mary, and there I fell, and my flesh alone was left. I will tell the truth, and do thou repeat it among the living. The Angel of the Lord took me up, and he of Hell cried out: 'O thou from Heaven, why dost thou rob me? Thou bearest away for thyself the eternal part of him for one little tear that snatches him from me; I will, however, deal in another fashion with the other (part, i.e., the body).'

"Thou knowest well how in the air is condensed that moist vapour which turns to water soon as it rises where the cold seizes it. He united that malevolent will, which seeks naught but evil, to his demoniacal intelligence and stirred up the mist and the wind by the power that his (angelic) nature gave him. Then, when the day was spent, he covered the valley with cloud, from Pratomagno to the great chain, and made the sky above so overcast, that the laden air was turned into water. Down poured the rain, and to the gullies came of it what the earth did not endure, and as it gathered in great streams it rushed so swiftly towards the royal river that nothing held it back. The raging Archiano found my frozen body near its outlet, and swept it into the Arno, and loosed on my breast the cross which I made of myself when the agony (of death) overcame me: it rolled me along its banks, and over its bottom, after which it covered and entangled me with its prey!"

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"I have reserved, for our last example of the landscape of Dante, a passage not less notable for its close description of what the writer feared and disliked, than for the ineffable tenderness, in which Dante is always raised as much above all other poets, as in softness the rose above all other flowers. Observe, Buonconte, as he dies, crosses his arms over his breast, pressing them together, partly in his pain, partly in prayer. His body thus lies by the river shore, as on a sepulchral monument, the arms folded into a cross. The rage of the river under the influence of the evil demon, *unlooses this cross,* dashing the body supinely away, and rolling it over and over by bank and bottom. Nothing can be truer to the action of a stream in fury than these lines. And how desolate is it all! The lonely flight—the grisly wound, "pierced in the throat," —the death, without help or pity,—only the name of Mary on the lips,—and the cross folded over the heart. Then the

rage of the demon and the river,—the noteless grave,—and, at last, even she who had been most trusted forgetting him, —'Giovanna, nor none else have care for me.' There is, I feel assured, nothing else like it in all the range of poetry." RUSKIN, Modern Painters, Vol. III, Ch. XV, par. 21.

THE TRAGEDY OF PIA'S WEDDED LIFE.

"Deh, quando tu sarai tornato al mondo,
e riposato de la lunga via"
seguitò il terzo spirito al secondo,
"ricorditi di me che son la Pia:
Siena mi fè; disfecemi Maremma;
salsi colui che 'nnanellata pria
disposando m' avea con la sua gemma." 130-136.

"Ah, when thou shalt have returned to the world and rested thyself from thy long journey" the third spirit followed on the second, "be mindful of me, who am Pia.* Siena made me; Maremma unmade me: he knows it who, first plighting troth, had wedded me with his own ring."

COMMENT.

The whole Commedia is admirable but I am attracted by this fifth canto of Purgatorio and especially by the words of Pia in which are unfolded all the beauty and power of Dante's great art. Buonconte da Montefeltro no longer speaks to the pilgrim Dante; he cannot add a word to his last words which describe, with tragic evidence, the disappearance of his mortal body on the battlefield. So Dante now finally knows how the great Ghibelline captain strayed so far from Campaldino, as prey to the raging river. The words which follow this tale, the words quoted above, seem to be sighed, rather than spoken. They are heard by Dante when he meets another company of spirits—given to prayer—who crowd about him, in their eagerness to see him.

*"*The Anonimo Fiorentino* and Benvenuto relate that while Pia of Siena was looking out of a window of the castle that looked out over a valley of the Maremma, one of her husband's servants, by his orders, seized her by the feet, and hurled her out of the window down the tremendous precipice below, and that she never was heard of again." Scartazzini quoted by W. W. Vernon (Readings on Purgatorio of Dante, vol. I, p. 183) who declares: "This passage has always been reputed one of those that demonstrate to the fullest extent Dante's marvellous power of condensed narrative."

After the stirring words of the soldier fallen on the battlefield, sword in hand, and now risen to a new life, after conquering, with the name of Mary on his lips, a more formidable enemy, we have in these words of Pia an exquisite sweetness of sound. It is at first, a little tremulous and timid. It comes forth with all feminine gentleness and grace, for it is a woman who speaks, a woman of Siena. In the brief narrative one finds all the art of Dante and all the beauty of the world.

Count G. L. Passerini, Florence, Italy. Librarian of the Laurenziana. Author of Dante. Formerly Editor of *Giornale Dantesco.*

CANTO VI.

DIVINE ILLUMINATION NECESSARY FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE SUBTLETIES OF FATE.

Che lume fia * tra 'l vero e lo 'ntelletto. 45.

Who will be to thee a lamp between the truth and the understanding.

COMMENT.

My favourite quotation from Dante is founded in this inscription which we have placed on the south side of the Italian House at Columbia University. The beauty of the quotation itself and the depth of thought contained therein, seem sufficient explanation of my choice.

John L. Gerig, Ph.D., Columbia University, New York. President and founder of Istituto di Coltura Italiana negli Stati Uniti.

THE RAPTUROUS MEETING OF THE TWO MANTUANS VIRGIL AND SORDELLO.

"Ma vedi là un' anima che posta
sola soletta inverso noi riguarda:
quella ne 'nsegnerà la via più tosta."

* Lombardi interprets this, "who (Beatrice) will so act, that thy intellect will come to know the truth in the same way as the light causes the eye to see the object as it is." Quoted by W. W. Vernon, Readings on the Purgatorio, vol. I, p. 195.

Venimmo a lei: o anima lombarda,
  come ti stavi altera e disdegnosa
  e nel mover de gli occhi onesta e tarda!
Ella non ci dicea alcuna cosa:
  ma lasciavane gir, solo sguardando
  a guisa di leon quando si posa.
Pur Virgilio si trasse a lei, pregando
  che ne mostrasse la miglior salita;
  e quella non rispuose al suo dimando,
ma di nostro paese e de la vita
  c' inchiese; e 'l dolce duca incominciava
  "Mantova . . .", e l' ombra, tutta in sè romita,
surse ver lui del loco ove pria stava,
  dicendo: "O Mantovano, io son Sordello
  de la tua terra!" E l' un l' altro abbracciava. 58-75

"But see yonder a spirit who is stationed quite alone by himself; he will point out the quickest way." We drew near to him: O Lombard soul, how nobly disdainful didst thou bear thyself and how slow and dignified the motion of thine eyes. Naught he said to us, but allowed us to move on, watching only after the manner of a lion when he crouches. Notwithstanding this, Virgil came to him, begging that he would show us the best ascent; and he answered not the request but questioned us about our country and life. And my gentle Guide began "Mantova" when the shade, all in himself absorbed, rose toward him from the place where erst it had been, saying: "Mantuan, I am Sordello of thy city"—and they embraced each other.

COMMENT.

1—This favourite quotation of mine describes an episode of the purest patriotism.

GIOVANNI RAINERI, Ph.D., University Professor, Senator of the Kingdom, Rome, Italy.

2—From the esthetic point of view this passage, in my judgment, is one of the most beautiful parts of the Divine Comedy. I admire it above all because of its profound patriotism and high Latin culture.

ETTORE PAIS, Senator of the Kingdom. Author of Storia di Roma, Rome, Italy.

3—The poignant pathos of this passage and the sharpness of its meaning have always caused a stirring reaction in me.

The appeal is, perhaps, stronger in those who, at one time or another, have found themselves treading over foreign soil and have been suddenly confronted by a fellow country-man. How warm and throbbing the embrace, so typical of the Latins! Patriotism and brotherhood seem to merge into one gesture more eloquent than words and so poignant with meaning.

F. S. MARINONI, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Ark.

4—The episode of the meeting of Dante and Virgil with Sordello is, to me, one of the most beautiful passages, if not the most beautiful of the sacred poem. The verse with which the poet describes the attitude of Sordello "a guisa di leon quando si posa" is like a mighty stroke of the chisel which causes the figure of the haughty and disdainful Lombard soul to leap out before our eyes: But then the falling of the shade into the arms of Virgil, upon hearing the word Mantova, is a scene of such evidence, produced with so much sobriety and purity of line and color, that it all seems to attain perfection of art.

Nor can the reader forget how this episode is the occasion and the spur for the terribly magnificent invective that follows, in which Dante rises up against the intestine discords of the Italian cities and explains once more, amidst the tumult of his affections, his political concept. The contrast so rapid, so immediate, and so violent brings into bold relief the loving gentility of the two Mantuans embracing each other at the remembrance of their country.

FILIPPO MEDA, attorney at law, Milan, Italy.

INVECTIVE AGAINST ITALY.

Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello, 5
nave sanza nocchiere in gran tempesta,
non donna di provincie, ma bordello! 76-79.

Ah Italy, thou slave, hostel of woe, vessel without pilot in a mighty storm, not mistress of provinces, but a brothel!

COMMENT.

No one who knows Italy and loves her can fail to appreciate the truth and pathos of those lines we all know so well.

We trust that she is now with better pilot and is on the way to smooth-sailing and a new renaissance!

T. W. HUNTINGTON, Jr., New York City. Director of the Italian Literary Guide Service.

LOVE OF COUNTRY.

Quell' anima gentil fu così presta,
sol per lo dolce suon de la sua terra,
di fare al cittadin suo quivi festa. 79-81

That gentle spirit (Sordello), at the mere mention of his city's name, was so prompt there to give glad welcome to his fellow-citizen.

COMMENT.

I select that passage because I should like to hope that Italians living abroad would always remember and apply it.

TOMMASEO TITTONI, President of the Senate, Rome, Italy.

CANTO VIII.

THE SUNSET HOUR.

Era già l' ora che volge il disio
ai navicanti e 'ntenerisce il core
lo dì c' han detto ai dolci amici addio;
e che lo novo peregrin d' amore
punge, se ode squilla di lontano
che paia il giorno pianger che si more; 1-6.

It was now the hour that turns back the desire of those who sail the seas and moves the heart to tenderness when to sweet friends that day they have bid adieu, and which pierces the new pilgrim with love if, from afar, he hears the chimes which seem to mourn for the dying day.

COMMENT.

1—These lines are the most perfect in all the qualities of poetry that I know of.

AUSTIN O'MALLEY, M.D., Ph.D., LL.D., Philadelphia, Pa. Author of Essays in Pastoral Medicine.

2—This passage has been chosen for decorative value and for the beauty of the image evoked, which is one of great tenderness and common experience.

Mrs. Arthur Long ("Marjorie Bowen"), Rolvenden, Kent, England. Author of The Pagoda, The Netherlands Display'd, etc.

3—The reason for my choice of this passage as my favourite is because I know nothing more tender or more gently mystical in all the literature of the world.

Louis Bertrand, Member of the French Academy, Paris, France.

4—It may be that these lovely lines mean more to me even than usual just now as I sit by a western window watching the sunset sky before the close of a perfect day, and surely one need not travel far from home to feel their significance and beauty. Why should one try to say things himself, when Dante has so superbly said them for him already?

Emma Endicott Marean, writer, Cambridge, Mass. Author of Eighteen (poems).

5—When twilight spreads upon us that melancholic veil, which makes our heart grow tender and lonely, my thoughts fly to my native country, to my folks near the "Queen of the Adriatic."

I consider myself a lucky voyager and, although I love this great country which has given me fame and wealth, still I adore my native land, and particularly at dusk do I fondly think of my folks and friends over there.

Giovanni Martinelli, operatic tenor, New York City.

6—This passage has always touched me deeply because I myself feel the hour of sunset so keenly.

It is the hour of the waning day when my physical being is relaxed and my mind sets itself to contemplate those things which are dear and near to me. Particularly have I felt this during my travels, out on the open sea, when, during the sunset hour, my mind has gone back and revived the fond memories of friends and loved ones.

The passage is particularly appropriate, too, because Dante symbolized the tolling bell so clearly that it sounds like the mournful cry of the dying day.

Armando Pedrini, Vice-President of the Bank of Italy, San Francisco, Calif.

7—It is very hard to say precisely why I have chosen this passage as my favourite. Perhaps it is because of a pure association of ideas, or a most intimate memory of the chance which caused me, while reading these lines when I was twenty years of age, to feel in them for the first time the divine music of Dante.

Louis Gillet, Prefect of the Musée de Chaalis. Editor of *La Revue des Deux Mondes,* Chaalis, Ermenouville (Oise), France.

8—It seems to me that in these lines verbal music has reached perfection. It ripples from them like the faint sweet echoes of a branch of silver bells. It is a cameo of the common-human sentiment of home, family and friends. No more tender or delicate cry ever escaped the heart of man. There breathes in it forever some haunting reminiscence of paradise whose mystic shores beckon to us through this ivory portal of perfect speech.

Thomas J. Shahan, S.T.D., J.U.L., titular Bishop of Germanicopolis. Rector Catholic University, Washington, D. C. Author of The Middle Ages.

9—Dante is one of the most exalted revealers of the Invisible. But he conceived a Hell all too material, with exhibitions of tortures which had moved his eyes. The mystery of Paradise, on the other hand, exceeded his vision. Purgatorio is a wonderful translation of the soul's expectation of the Kingdom of God, revealed in aspects superterrestrial and humanly true. Nowhere better than in the lines quoted above, it seems to me, has the desire of Dante's soul found the measure of its power.

Emile Baumann, man-of-letters and novelist, Garches (Seine et Oise) France.

10—How many times during my boyhood while I was looking out from our villa which commanded a view of the lonely sea and the hill of Porto Maurizio, with the sun, like a magician, extending his golden wand over the landscape, did I hear my father repeat these verses to the accompaniment of the Angelus bells!

I do not know whether the pathetic suggestion of those remote, familiar memories enters into the remarkable enchantment which those verses hold for me, but certain it is that to me their beauty is without equal.

The sad tenderness, the abandon, the bewilderment, the love and desire of the fatherland, the ensemble of sentiments that both time and distance awake in the soul of the wayfarer —all this is here rendered in an art which, because of its crystalline simplicity and melodious delicacy, reaches perfection.

Every word touches us profoundly, every phrase moves our heart and fills it with memories and affections.

Our emotion is such that it almost overpowers us and we bemoan the fact that we have not before us the divine Poet to worship, so that we might pay him homage and embrace him with unrestrained enthusiasm.

Angiolo Silvio Novaro, poet and essayist. Oneglia Imperia, Casa Rossa, Italy. Author of *Sul Mare; Dio e Qui*

THE SOULS SING THE COMPLINE HYMN.

THE COMING OF THE TWO ANGELS.

'*Te lucis ante*' sì devotamente
le uscio di bocca e con sì dolci note,
che fece me a me uscir di mente:
e l'altre poi dolcemente e devote
seguitar lei per tutto l' inno intero,
avendo li occhi a le superne rote.
Aguzza qui, lettor, ben li occhi al vero,
chè 'l velo è ora ben tanto sottile,
certo che 'l trapassar dentro è leggiero.
Io vidi quello esercito gentile
tacito poscia riguardare in sue,
quasi aspettando, palido e umile;

e vidi uscir de l' alto e scender giue
due angeli con due spade affocate,
tronche e private de le punte sue.
Verdi come fogliette pur mo nate
erano in veste, che da verdi penne
percosse traean dietro e ventilate.
L' un poco sovra noi a star si venne,
e l' altro scese in l' opposita sponda,
sì che la gente in mezzo si contenne.
Ben discernea in lor la testa bionda;
ma ne la faccia l' occhio si smarria,
come virtù ch' a troppo si confonda.
"Ambo vegnon del grembo di Maria"
disse Sordello "a guardia de la valle,
per lo serpente che verrà vie via." 13-39.

Te lucis ante so devoutly issued from his mouth, and with such music, that it rapt me from my very sense of self. And the others then sweetly and devoutly accompanied it through the entire hymn, having their eyes upon the supernal wheels.

Reader, here sharpen well thine eyes to the truth, for the veil * now indeed is so thin that it is easy to penetrate within it. I saw that noble army thereafter silently gaze upward, as if in expectancy, pallid and

* "I say then that Dante lays down and distinguishes two propositions: *il vero* and *il velo. Il vero* is difficult to explain rightly; *il velo* is quite easy to penetrate. . . . *Il velo* (as we shall see in the lines that follow) is, two Angels with fiery swords in their hands, come to guard the valley and defend the spirits from their adversary, in accordance with the Compline prayer quoted above; they station themselves on opposite banks. A serpent approaches the spirits who tremble with fear. The swords of the Angels flash out, and their green pinions give forth a sound at which the serpent retreats. That is the *velo* as transparent and clear as it can be. The *vero* is that the Evil One ensnares souls at the approach of night, assailing them with impure phantasms in slumber. . . . Only we must not forget that we are now on the mountain of Purgatory where souls would not be subject any longer to such phantasms, nor would they need to pray for aid against them. How is this then? . . . I believe that Dante wished specially to assign to these spirits of the negligent at the anteportals of Purgatory (besides their having to wait outside before their purgation) this penance, that they should be in fear, and be troubled about the assault of the Serpent every evening; and every evening should have to turn to God in those identical prayers in which they invoke the succour of the Angels against the assault that is threatening them. . . . And perhaps Dante wished also to symbolize another ordinance of the Providence of God; that is, that they who in their present life delay their repentance, are by Divine Judgment and by the effect of the evil habits they have allowed to grow old upon them, more hardly tormented by the suggestions of the Devil; and therefore require more watchfulness and more prayers, in invoking the Divine succour." Cesari, *Bellezze della Commedia di Dante,* vol. II, pp. 146-149.

humble; and I saw issuing from on high and descending two Angels, with two fiery swords truncated and deprived of their points. Green, as tender plants just born, was their raiment, which, beaten and blown by their green wings, they trailed behind. One came and posted himself a little above us, and the other descended upon the opposite bank, so that the people were guarded between them. I clearly discerned in them their blond heads but in their faces the eye got bewildered, like a faculty that is confounded by excess. "Both are come from the bosom of Mary," said Sordello, "for guard of the valley, because of the serpent that will come presently."

NINO DE' VISCONTI DISCOURSES WITH DANTE.

Ver me si fece, e io ver lui mi fei:
  Giudice Nin gentil, quanto mi piacque,
  quando ti vidi non esser tra' rei!
Nullo bel salutar tra noi si tacque;
  poi dimandò: "Quant' è che tu venisti
  al piè del monte per le lontane acque?"
"Oh!" diss' io lui, "per entro i luoghi tristi
  venni stamane, e sono in prima vita,
  ancor che l' altra, sì andando, acquisti."
E come fu la mia risposta udita,
  Sordello ed elli indietro si raccolse
  come gente di subito smarrita.
L'uno a Virgilio e l' altro a un si volse
  che sedea lì, gridando: "Su. Currado:
  vieni a veder che Dio per grazia volse."
Poi, volto a me: "Per quel singular grado
  che tu dei a colui che sì nasconde
  lo suo primo perchè, che non li è guado,
quando sarai di là da le larghe onde.
  dì a Giovanna mia che per me chiami
  là dove a li 'nnocenti si risponde.
Non credo che la sua madre più m' ami,
  poscia che trasmutò le bianche bende,
  le quai convien che, misera, ancor brami.
Per lei assai di lieve si comprende
  quanto in femmina foco d' amor dura,
  se l' occhio o 'l tatto spesso non l' accende.
Non le farà sì bella sepultura
  la vipera che 'l Melanese accampa,
  com' avria fatto il gallo di Gallura."

Così dicea, segnato de la stampa,
nel suo aspetto, di quel dritto zelo
che misuratamente in core avvampa. 52-84.

He drew near to me, and I drew near to him: Noble Judge Nino! how I did rejoice when I saw that thou wast not among the damned! No fair greeting was left unsaid between us; then he asked: "How long is it since thou camest to the foot of the mountain across the far waters?" "Oh!" said I to him "by way of the regions of woe came I this morning, and am in my first (i.e. my mortal) life. Albeit in going thus, I may gain the other." And when my answer was heard, Sordello and he drew themselves back like folk suddenly bewildered. The one (Sordello) turned to Virgil and the other (Nino) to one who was seated there, crying: "Up, Conrad, come and see what God through grace hath willed." Then turning to me: "By that singular gratitude thou owest unto Him who so hides His prime purpose that there is no ford to it, when thou shalt be beyond the wide waters, tell my Giovanna to intercede for me there (in heaven) where answer is given to the innocent. I do not think her mother loves me any longer, since she hath changed the white weepers (of a widow) which she, wretched, must long for once again. Through her easily enough is comprehended how long the fire of love lasts in woman, if sight and touch do not often feed its flame. The viper that the Milanese blazons on his shield will not so fairly adorn her tomb as (my own device) the cock of Gallura would have done." Thus spoke he, marked in his countenance with the impress of that righteous zeal which in due measure glows in the heart.

THE SERPENT APPROACHES THE SOULS WHO TREMBLE WITH FEAR.

Com' ei parlava, e Sordello a sè il trasse
dicendo: "Vedi là 'l nostro avversaro";
e drizzò il dito perchè 'n là guardasse.
Da quella parte onde non ha riparo
la picciola vallea, era una biscia,
forse qual diede ad Eva il cibo amaro.
Tra l'erba e i fior venia la mala striscia,
volgendo ad ora ad or la testa, e 'l dosso
leccando come bestia che si liscia.
Io non vidi, e però dicer non posso,
come mosser li astor celestiali;
ma vidi bene e l' uno e l' altro mosso.
Sentendo fender l' aere a le verdi ali,
fuggì 'l serpente, e li angeli dier volta,
suso a le poste rivolando iguali. 94-108

While he (Virgil) was yet speaking, lo! Sordello drew him to himself, exclaiming: "See there our adversary," and pointed his finger so that he should look thither. On that side where the little valley has no defence there was a serpent, perchance such as gave to Eve the bitter food. Through the grass and the flowers came the evil reptile, turning ever and anon its head towards its back, licking as does a beast when it sleeks itself. I did not see, and therefore cannot tell how the celestial falcons moved, but I distinctly saw both the one and the other in motion. Hearing the air cleft by their green wings the serpent fled, and the Angels wheeled upwards to their stations in equal flight.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"For my own part, I feel that if it is possible to express one's reverent admiration for one passage more than another in Dante's mighty poem, Canto VIII is to me the most beautiful of all that he wrote." W. W. Vernon, *Readings on The Purgatorio,* vol. I, p. 242.

RIGHTEOUS ZEAL.

Così dicea, segnato de la stampa,
nel suo aspetto, di quel dritto zelo
che misuratamente in core avvampa. 82-84.

Thus spake he, marked in his countenance with the impress of that righteous zeal which in due measure glows in the heart.

COMMENT.

Thus Dante comments on the words of Nino Visconti of Pisa who is characterized by the history of those remote times, as "gentle of soul and manners, bold and fearless." Here in Purgatory Dante attains supreme serenity and human truth, while speaking of affections and things that must move the heart of every man. And his words give a new orientation to our sentiments and deeds.

Augusto Turati, secretary of the Fascisti Party, Rome, Italy.

CANTO IX.

DANTE HAS A STRANGE DREAM INDICATIVE OF HIS TRANSPORTATION TO THE ENTRANCE GATE OF PURGATORY.

Ne l' ora che comincia i tristi lai
la rondinella presso a la mattina,
forse a memoria de' suo' primi guai,
e che la mente nostra, peregrina
più da la carne e men da' pensier presa,
a le sue vision quasi è divina,
in sogno mi parea veder sospesa
un' aguglia nel ciel con penne d' oro,
con l' ali aperte e a calare intesa;
ed esser mi parea là dove fuoro
abbandonati i suoi da Ganimede,
quando fu ratto al sommo consistoro.
Fra me pensava: "Forse questa fiede
pur qui per uso, e forse d' altro loco
disdegna di portarne suso in piede."
Poi mi parea che, poi rotata un poco,
terribil come folgor discendesse,
e me rapisse suso infino al foco.
Ivi parea che ella e io ardesse;
e sì lo 'ncendio imaginato cosse,
che convenne che 'l sonno si rompesse.
Non altrimenti Achille si riscosse,
li occhi svegliati rivolgendo in giro
e non sappiendo là dove si fosse,
quando la madre da Chirone a Schiro
trafuggò lui dormendo in le sue braccia,
là onde poi li Greci il dipartiro;
che mi scoss' io, sì come da la faccia
mi fuggì il sonno, e diventai smorto,
come fa l' uom che, spaventato, agghiaccia. 13-42.

At the hour nearing morning, when the little swallow begins her plaintive lays, perchance in memory of her former woes, and when our mind, wandering yet more out of the flesh and less hampered by thoughts, is almost prophetic in its visions; methought I saw in a dream an eagle hovering in the sky, with feathers of gold, with wings widespread and intent to swoop: and he seemed to me to be in that place (Mt. Ida) where his companions were abandoned by Ganymede, when he was snatched aloft to the supreme consistory. I thought within myself: "Per-

haps this bird strikes only here through wont, and perhaps from other places disdains to carry anyone upward in his talons. Then it seemed to me that, having wheeled a little, it descended terrible as the lightning and snatched me upwards far as the (sphere of) fire. There it seemed that it (the Eagle) and I caught fire, and so greatly did the imaginary burning scorch me, that of necessity my sleep was broken.

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"What is most noticeable in these lines (13-18) is the mixture of accurate observation and description with profound reasoning, and the exquisite phrasing by which different thoughts are merged and made to form one element. . . . Their harmony, like some solemn strain of music, attunes us for the dream that is to follow." J. A. Symonds, *Introduction to the Study of Dante,* p. 200.

DANTE DESCRIBES THE GATE OF PURGATORY AND THE ANGEL GUARD.

Vidi una porta, e tre gradi di sotto
per gire ad essa, di color diversi,
e un portier ch' ancor non facea motto.
E come l' occhio più e più v' apersi
vidil seder sovra 'l grado soprano,
tal ne la faccia ch' io non lo soffersi;
e una spada nuda avea in mano,
che reflettea i raggi sì ver noi,
ch' io dirizzava spesso il viso invano.
"Dite costinci: che volete voi?"
cominciò elli a dire: "ov' è la scorta?
guardate che 'l venir su non vi noi."
"Donna del ciel, di queste cose accorta,"
rispuose il mio maestro a lui, "pur dianzi
ne disse: 'Andate là: quivi è la porta'."
"Ed ella i passi vostri in bene avanzi"
ricominciò il cortese portinaio:
"venite dunque a' nostri gradi innanzi."
Là ne venimmo; e lo scaglion primaio,
bianco marmo era sì pulito e terso,
ch' io mi specchiai in esso qual io paio.
Era il secondo tinto più che perso,
d' una petrina ruvida e arsiccia,
crepata per lo lungo e per traverso.

Lo terzo, che di sopra s' ammassiccia,
porfido mi parea sì fiammeggiante,
come sangue che fuor di vena spiccia.
Sovra questo tenea ambo le piante
l' angel di Dio, sedendo in su la soglia,
che mi sembiava pietra di diamante.
Per li tre gradi su di buona voglia
mi trasse il duca mio, dicendo: "Chiedi
umilemente che 'l serrame scioglia."
Divoto mi gittai a' santi piedi:
misericordia chiesi che m'aprisse,
ma pria nel petto tre fiate mi diedi.
Sette P ne la fronte mi descrisse
col punton de la spada, e "Fa che lavi,
quando se' dentro, queste piaghe" disse.
Cenere o terra che secca si cavi
d'un color fora col suo vestimento;
e di sotto da quel trasse due chiavi.
L'una era d' oro e l' altra era d' argento:
pria con la bianca e poscia con la gialla
fece a la porta sì, ch' i' fui contento.
"Quandunque l' una d' este chiavi falla,
che non si volga dritta per la toppa"
diss' elli a noi, "non s' apre questa calla.
Più cara è l' una; ma l' altra vuol troppa
d' arte e d' ingegno avanti che diserri,
perch' ella è quella che nodo disgroppa.
Da Pier le tegno; e dissemi ch' i' erri
anzi ad aprir ch' a tenerla serrata,
pur che la gente a' piedi mi s' atterri."
Poi pinse l' uscio a la porta sacrata,
dicendo: "Intrate; ma facciovi accorti
che di fuor torna chi 'ndietro si guata." 76-132.

I saw a gate, and underneath leading up to it, three steps of divers colours, and likewise a gatekeeper who as yet said not a word. And as I opened my eyes there more and more, I saw him sitting upon the topmost step, in visage such, that I could not endure it. And in his hand he held a naked sword which so reflected its rays towards us that I often raised my sight in vain. "Tell it from there, what would ye?" began he to say: "Where is thy escort? Take heed that your ascending be not to your hurt!" "A lady from Heaven (Lucia), well-skilled in these matters," replied my Master to him, "only just now said

to us: 'Go thither, there is the gate.'" "And may she advance your steps to a good end," resumed the courteous gatekeeper; "Come forward then unto our steps."

Thither we came to the first great stair; it was of white marble, so polished and smooth, that in it I saw myself reflected even as I am. The second, of a hue darker than perse, was of a rough and scorched stone, full of cracks in all its length and breadth. The third which is massy above, seemed to me, of porphyry, as flaming red as blood that gushes forth from a vein. Upon this (last step) the Angel of God was resting both his feet, sitting upon the threshold which appeared to me to be rock of adamant. Up over the three steps my Leader drew me with good will, saying "Beg humbly that he undo the lock." Devoutly I threw myself at the holy feet; I besought for mercy's sake that he would open for me; but first I struck my breast three times. Seven *P's* (symbols of the seven capital sins) upon my forehead he inscribed with the point of his sword, and, "See that thou wash away these scars as soon as thou art within," he said.

Ashes or earth when it is dug up dry, would be of an equal colour with his vesture, and from beneath it he drew forth two keys. One was of gold and the other was of silver; first with the white, and then with the yellow he so did to the door that I was content. "Whenever one of these keys fails and turns not rightly in the lock," he said to us, "this narrow entrance will not open. More precious is one (the golden key); but the other requires much art and wit before it unlocks, because it is the one which unties the knot. From Peter I hold them; and he told me, that I should err rather in opening the door, than in keeping it shut, provided only that the people prostrate themselves at my feet." Then he pushed open the door of the holy gate, saying: "Enter; but I gave you warning that he who looks back must go out again."

COMMENT FROM THE PAST.

"The three steps which lead up to the gate of Purgatory symbolise the conversion of the sinner and his repentance. The first, of white marble, so brightly polished that he sees in it his own reflection, signifies the examination of conscience; the second, of rugged stone, signifies contrition; the third, blood-red, denotes the purpose of amendment, which cannot be accomplished without suffering and mortification. The angel (the Confessor) sits at the threshold of the gate, his feet resting on the third step, because it is his office to guide the penitent in his contrition and satisfaction. Full of remorse, the sinner throws himself on his knees before him, and thrice

strikes his breast, indicating the act of confession. The angel, in ash-coloured vesture, writes seven *P's* on his brow, inquires into his worthiness, and gives him absolution by the application of the silver and golden keys. Then the door opens for him and he enters Purgatory, there to fulfil his penance and expiation." Franz Hettinger, *Dante's Divine Commedia,* p. 326.

CANTO X.

THE EMPEROR TRAJAN ACCEDES TO A POOR WIDOW'S REQUEST.

I' dico di Traiano imperadore;
e una vedovella li era al freno,
di lacrime atteggiata e di dolore.
Intorno a lui parea calcato e pieno
di cavalieri, e l' aguglie ne l' oro
sovr' essi in vista al vento si movieno.
La miserella intra tutti costoro
parea dicer: "Segnor, fammi vendetta
di mio figliuol ch' è morto, ond' io m'accoro."
Ed elli a lei rispondere: "Or aspetta
tanto ch' i torni." E quella: "Segnor mio,"
come persona in cui dolor s' affretta,
"se tu non torni?" Ed ei: "Chi fia dov' io,
la ti farà." Ed ella; "L' altrui bene
a te che fia, se il tuo metti in oblio?"
Ond' elli: "Or ti conforta; ch' ei convene
ch' i' solva il mio dovere anzi ch' i' mova:
giustizia vuole e pietà mi ritene." 76-93.

Of Trajan, the Emperor, I speak: and a poor widow was at his bridle in the attitude of tears and grief. Round about him there seemed a press and throng of knights, and the eagles in gold above him moved visibly to the wind. The poor woman amid them all appeared to be saying: "My Lord, avenge me of my son who is slain, whereat I am heart-broken." He answered her. "Now wait until I return." And she, like a person in whom grief is impatient: "But, my Lord, if thou dost not return?" And therefore he: "One who shall be in my place will do it for thee." And she: "What will the good deed of another profit thee if thou art mindless of thine own?" Whereupon he: "Now comfort thee, for needs must I fulfil my duty ere I go; justice requires it, and pity holds me back."

COMMENT.

I have always regarded this reply of the poor widow to the Emperor Trajan as one of the most telling and pathetic speeches in Dante, both by reason of its brevity of language as well as its depth of thought.

Sir Edward Sullivan, Bart., London, England.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE CATERPILLAR, AN IMAGE OF MAN'S IMMORTAL LIFE.

"Non v' accorgete voi che noi siam vermi
nati a formar l' angelica farfalla,
che vola a la giustizia sanza schermi?" 124-126

"Do ye not perceive that we are worms, born to form the angelic butterfly which flies up to judgment without defence?"

COMMENT.

There are so many Dantean passages that are remarkable that it is difficult to choose between them. The foregoing, however, is one of my favourite quotations.

Sir Esme Howard, Washington, D. C., British Ambassador to the United States.

CANTO XI.

THE PROUD RECITE THE LORD'S PRAYER.

"O padre nostro, che ne' cieli stai,
non circunscritto, ma per più amore
ch' ai primi effetti di là su tu hai,
laudato sia 'l tuo nome e 'l tuo valore
da ogni creatura, com' è degno
di render grazie al tuo dolce vapore.
Vegna ver noi la pace del tuo regno,
chè noi ad essa non potem da noi,
s' ella non vien, con tutto nostro ingegno.
Come del suo voler li angeli tuoi
fan sacrificio a te, cantando osanna,
così facciano li uomini de' suoi.

Dà oggi a noi la cotidiana manna,
sanza la qual per questo aspro deserto
a retro va chi più di gir s' affanna.
E come noi lo mal ch' avem sofferto
perdoniamo a ciascuno, e tu perdona
benigno, e non guardar lo nostro merto.
Nostra virtù che di leggier s' adona,
non spermentar con l' antico avversaro,
ma libera da lui che sì la sprona.
Quest' ultima preghiera, signor caro,
già non si fa per noi, chè non bisogna,
ma per color che dietro a noi restaro."
"Così a sè e noi buona ramogna
quell' ombre orando, andavan sotto il pondo,
simile a quel che tal volta si sogna,
disparmente angosciate tutte a tondo
e lasse su per la prima cornice,
purgando la caligine del mondo.
Se di là sempre ben per noi si dice,
di qua che dire e far per lor si puote
da quei c' hanno al voler buona radice?
Ben si de' loro atar lavar le note
che portar quinci, sì che, mondi e lievi,
possano uscire a le stellate rote. 1-36.

O Our Father who art in Heaven, not circumscribed, but through the greater love which to the first effects on high Thou hast,* praised be Thy name and Thy power, by every creature, even as it is meet to render thanks to Thy sweet effluence. May the peace of Thy kingdom come upon us, for we cannot of ourselves attain unto it with all our striving, if it come not. As of their will Thine angels, singing *HOSANNA,* make sacrifice to Thee, so may men make sacrifice of theirs. Give us this day the daily manna without which in this rough desert he goes backward who most toils to advance. And as we forgive everyone the evil we have suffered, do Thou graciously forgive and regard not our deserts. Put not our virtue, which lightly is subdued, to trial with the old adversary but deliver us from him who so assails it. This last prayer, dear Lord, is not indeed made for ourselves, for it is not needed, but for those who have remained behind us." Thus praying good speed for themselves and for us, these spirits were going under their burden,

* "Not circumscribed by Heaven, but having Thy Seat there because of the love Thou bearest to the first effects, the angels, and the heavens, of Thyself the First Cause" (Charles Eliot Norton).

like that of which one sometimes dreams, unequal all in anguish around and weary, along the first cornice, purging away the mists of the world. If yonder (in Purgatory) they always ask good for us, what can be said and done here (on earth) for them by those who have their will rooted in good? Truly we ought to help them to wash away their stains which they have carried from hence, so that, pure and light, they may go forth into the starry spheres.

COMMENT.

The proud-made-humble are represented in Purgatorio by these heavily laden spirits who are reciting the paraphrase of The Lord's Prayer—the prayer which is in itself a testimony of the humility of man before the Almighty. Dante's paraphrase of the Our Father is one of the many passages of the Divine Comedy of which Professor Jefferson B. Fletcher of Columbia University, who recently made an experiment in metre for the immortal poem, would say that Dante's "bello stile" combines the logical precision of an Aquinas with the melodic virtuosity of a Bach. Verdi put this paraphrase to music.

F. A. Marcucci, Ph.D., assistant editor of *Il Progresso Italo-Americano,* New York City.

2—If, as Pere Joachim Berthier has shown in his monumental commentary on the Purgatorio the great Florentine was on speaking terms with the scholastics, nay, was so impregnated with their teaching, especially that of St. Thomas Aquinas, which was instilled into his mind by an uncle, a Dominican, at Santa Maria Novella, we may expect that he has the genuine feel for things Catholic not only as regards doctrines but also those religious traditions which surged freely amongst the people. Religion was to him such a romantic thing that he could turn it into the highest dramatic form. Therefore, in many places of his *Divina Commedia* there are climaxes of the highest dramatic lyric import.

But, probably, nowhere does Dante show the innate dramatic power of Catholicism so well as in this eleventh canto of the *Purgatorio* where he pictures for us the souls of the just being cleansed for admission to the eternal realms. Here he does not lean, as one would expect, on the more popular

doctrine of St. Bonaventure, but rather takes over part and parcel the positions of St. Thomas Aquinas.

It must be borne in mind that the Angelical spoke on the question of Purgatory, if he ever spoke with authority on any subject, for we have no less than seven treatises of his on the Our Father. And in all these treatises he has something to say about the Souls in Purgatory. He did not deem it time lost to write so much upon a subject which received its final dogmatic setting a few centuries later at the Council of Trent where Thomas's own exposition of Purgatory was incorporated into the accepted deposit of the Faith.

Before Dante's time all the outstanding spiritual leaders devoted their pens to an exposition of the Our Father. During the period of his captivity St. Cyprian of Carthage in his exquisite Latin wrote one of the first expositions of the Lord's Prayer for the confessors of the Faith, held in chains. He seemed to have set the fashion, for, from his day up to the time of Dante, there were countless writers who felt that the inexhaustible riches of the Our Father could never adequately be set forth. As devotion to the Souls in Purgatory grew as a consequence of the institution of All Soul's Day by St. Odo of Cluny, we find St. Mechtilde writing a treatise where every petition of the Our Father was directed to the Souls in Purgatory, where every petition had reference to their own desires to see their suffering ended and their admittance into heaven made sure. This popular little tract was very widely spread and thus, undoubtedly, was known not only by the Angelic Doctor but, also, by Dante himself.

Besides, whilst attending classes at Santa Maria Novella, he must have learned devotion to the Poor Souls, for this is one of the most popular devotions of the Dominican Order. No other Order offered its members so many suffrages after death. Hence the common saying arose that "it was a good thing to be a dead Dominican," because of the prayers offered by the brethren in behalf of the departed soul. Laymen of all classes desired the privilege of being buried in Dominican cloisters so as to participate in, as far as they could, the prayers offered by the friars, whenever they passed the graves, either going to school or to the chapel or to the refectory.

These historical facts must be kept in mind before one can begin to understand fully the reason why Dante devoted so much of his time to a study of Purgatory. He was but giving echo to the common pleadings of the faithful on a subject which touches the human soul in a most intimate way. For no other reason than his treatise on Purgatory, Dante may justly be claimed as one of the Church's great theologians. He not only set forth the theory about God's cleansing-house but also incorporated some of the legends deposited upon the shores of dogma by the ages. In his selection of legends and doctrinal points, officially recognized by the Church, he betrayed his Catholic instincts.

There are more dramatic spots in the *Divina Commedia* than this eleventh canto of the *Purgatorio* where Dante shows us the justice of God in keeping men's souls in a cleansing-place until they are pure enough to see God face to face. But there is none which sets forth so clearly his Catholic spirit and instincts. He might, without in any way truncating his plan, have omitted the Our Father as uttered by the Poor Souls. But, by introducing it, he shows clearly that his thought was in keeping with that of the Catholic ages which had always used the Lord's Prayer for the assuaging of the pains of the Suffering Ones.

How admirably in the opening line of the Our Father he presents to us the doctrine of the creation of heaven and earth and even the place where the souls are suffering! How eloquently he shows that, even though these souls are in bitter pain, they are not "as such who have no hope." Hence they are not without thanks for the purging that will bring them to heaven in God's good time. If they look for the light of heaven, they feel they cannot attain it in Purgatory unless it be given as the one hope that bears them up. As the angels surround the throne of the Almighty to sing glorious alleluias, so they beg the privilege of joining their groans to the great chorus that goes up constantly to the Almighty. They ask, for each day of their tarrying there, the daily manna without which they would most certainly come into most rough places, unable to advance their steps. They plead that as they forgive the sins of others they may be forgiven their own by God. They plead that they may not be exposed to any temptation,

asking that they may be spared the incitements to any evil. And finally comes the superb and tender plea:

> "This last petition, dearest Lord! is made
> Not for ourselves; since that were needless now;
> But for their sakes who after us remain."

The background to the Our Father as painted by Dante is vivid and lurid, and into it comes the calm prayer of resignation, taught to the Apostles of old and echoed ever since by the Church Militant on this earth and spoken with absolutely sound orthodoxy and authentic unsentimentality by those who, owing to their pains, might have cried out in discontent. This commentary of the great Florentine poet is one of the most clear-cut statements of Catholic theology. It is surcharged with a humanity that reminds us that the Our Father was a prayer taught by Christ with infinite tenderness to men who were to preach to their fellows to the end of time. By inserting the Our Father in the *Purgatorio,* Dante was simply giving voice to his own Faith and the Faith handed down from apostolic time.

THOMAS M. SCHWERTNER, O.P., S.T.LR., LL.D., editor of The Rosary Magazine. Author, Dante, the Bard of Catholicism, Dante and the Other World. Pastor of the Holy Name Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

PETITION FOR DAILY GRACE.

> Dà oggi a noi la cotidiana manna,
> sanza la qual per questo aspro deserto
> a retro va chi più di gir s' affanna. 13-15.

Give us this day our daily manna without which, in this rough desert, he goes backward who most toils to advance.

COMMENT.

This passage came to my notice years ago. With some strange sense of its personal applicability I learned it by heart. To this very day, when I am tired and discouraged, I can stimulate my flagging pulses by repeating the lines to myself. I have neither the Italian scholarship, nor the general culture to justify any claim that my choice is especially excellent. I

know only that the passage I have quoted produces in me these blessed effects. There seems to be about them, for me, some white magic!

William N. Berkeley, Ph.D., M.D., New York City. Author of The Principles and Practice of Endocrine Medicine.

FAME.

Non è il mondan romore altro ch' un fiato
di vento, ch' or vien quinci e or vien quindi,
e muta nome perchè muta lato. 100-102

Earthly fame is naught but a breath of wind, that comes now this way and now that, and changes name because it shifts its quarter.

COMMENT.

1—The reason why I am fond of this quotation is that as a Professor of History, all my life, I have been deeply impressed with the instability of human fame. The great of one period are wholly unknown in another; those who were without fame in one period become the leaders of thought in another.

Stephen P. Duggan, Ph.D., director of The Institute of International Education, New York City. Author of A History of Education.

2—Since flying rumours and judgments of the world are generally influenced by personal feelings or resentments, or by false respect or fear of the public, he does wrong who conforms to them either his judgment or his conduct.

Thaon di Revel, Duke, Senator of the Kingdom. Grand Admiral of the Italian Navy, Rome, Italy.

3—I do not think this is the most powerful or sublime passage of Dante, but it is the one that has most often occurred to me, during the last thirty years of my political life in which time I have even indulged a little in literature and art, and became convinced of this truth so admirably expressed by the Poet.

Pietro Niccolini, Ferrara, Italy. Senator of the Kingdom. Author of L'Amore e L'Arte di Dante.

4—Some Dantean verses refer to the history of Italy and they are, therefore, of little interest to foreigners. Others are closely related to the theme of a canto and, detached, are not easily or well understood. Others finally have a political value for Italians. They sound like prophecies that have today come true and especially these passages of the poem move us most. They cannot, however, have the same effect upon foreigners. So it is very difficult for me to pick out favourite stanzas that can be universally appreciated.

The *terzina* quoted above, however, is certainly applicable to all people because its truth, as a philosophical reflection with originality of form, is born of common, human experience.

RAFFAELE GIROFOLO, senator of the Kingdom, Rome, Italy.

CANTO XII.

DANTE IS APPROACHED AND WELCOMED BY THE GENTLE ANGEL OF THE CORNICE OF THE PROUD.

A noi venia la creatura bella,
bianco vestito e ne la faccia quale
par tremolando mattutina stella. 88-90.

To us came the beauteous being, robed in white and in his countenance such as appears with its tremulous light the morning star.

COMMENT.

I admire this quotation because of the beautiful sound of the language, the choice of words and the picture conjured up.

FRANK CRANE, D.D., Los Angeles, Calif. Author of Christmas and the Year Round.

THE ANGEL SPEAKS OF HUMAN FRAILTY

"O gente umana, per volar su nata,
perchè a poco vento così cadi?" 95, 96.

"O human race, born to fly upward, why, at a breath of wind, thus fall ye down?"

COMMENT.

We stumble and fall because of this crushing load of sinful pride.

"Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza fesse creando . . .
fu de la volontà la libertate; Par. V, 19.

and we, through *nati a formar l' angelica farfalla,* ungrateful, undutiful, abuse that precious *libertade,* setting up our own *volontade* against that of the Giver, conscious though we may be that in *sua volontade è nostra pace.* Par. III, 85.

MARGARET H. JACKSON, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.

CANTO XIV.

ONLY SPIRITUAL POSSESSIONS SHOULD BE THE OBJECTS OF MAN'S INTENSIVE DESIRE.

"O gente umana, perchè poni 'l core
là 'v' è mestier di consorte divieto?" 86-87.

"O human race, why dost thou set thy heart on things, wherein of necessity all sharing is forbidden?"

COMMENT.

Where Dante apostrophized mankind, we find depth of thought, brevity and direct personification, which is the very soul of poetry.

HELEN M. R. FASSETT, A.M. (Sorbonne) Grand Rapids, Mich.

VIRGIL'S SAD REFLECTION UPON THE PERVERSITY OF HUMAN CHOICE.

"Chiamavi il cielo e intorno vi si gira,
mostrandovi le sue bellezze etterne,
e l' occhio vostro pur a terra mira;
onde vi batte chi tutto discerne." 148-151.

"Heaven calls to you and around you wheels, displaying to you its eternal beauties, and your eye gazes only upon earth; wherefore He who discerns all things scourges you."

COMMENT.

1—I believe that the verses quoted are in themselves so eloquent as scarcely to need any word of comment upon my part.

GIACOME DE MARTINO, Royal Italian Ambassador to the United States, Washington, D. C.

2—The sublimest thing in nature, the celestial sphere, which in its revolution carries the myriads of resplendent orbs in a grand procession across the heavens, is here contrasted with that which is the most commonplace and inconsequential; namely, the ground under our feet.

The symbolic meaning is evident.

The exalted, the beautiful is all around us, and still we often prefer the low and the ugly.

It is this false valuation that constitutes the chief tragedy of life.

WILLIAM E. BREAZEALE, professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J.

3—These, I am inclined to think (if one must choose), are perhaps the finest lines in Dante. At any rate they sum up, in splendid brevity, that divine Platonic philosophy which is native to all great poets but by none carried to such depths and heights as by Dante who sees the great vision in the added radiance of Christian revelation. In him the Troubadour ideal of chivalrous love is lifted to a highly spiritualized philosophy, in which Beauty is but the outward and visible sign of eternal Truth, by contemplating which the soul is fired with the love of Wisdom and Virtue. This philosophy of Love he made completely his own, expanding it gradually from the love of one woman until it embraced "the Love that moves the sun and the other stars." To his mind Divine Love reveals itself not only in human love and in all the varied beauty of the universe, ever seeking its own and calling to the soul of man, but even in the very pit of Hell where all that loves not God and that God cannot love is eternally separated from Him—by its own act, not God's. "Well it is," says Dante (Par. XV, 10-12) "that he should grieve without limit who,

for the sake of that which does not last, doth strip himself eternally of this love." It is Love which, when ears are deaf to its call and eyes blind to its beauty, makes pain its scourge to drive men to its arms.

HERBERT H. YEAMES, PH.D., professor of Greek and Latin Literature, Hobart College, Geneva, N. Y. Author of Pilgrim Sonnets.

CANTO XV.

VIRGIL'S BEAUTIFUL SIMILE OF THE LIGHT OF GOD'S GRACE.

Quello infinito e ineffabil bene
che là su è, così corre ad amore
com' a lucido corpo raggio vene. 67-69.

That infinite and ineffable Good which is yonder on high, speeds to love, just as a ray of light is drawn to a lucid body.

COMMENT.

In these verses Dante gives a beautiful reflection of that light "that never was on land or sea," that glistening golden link of love, which, alone in the chain of human destiny, unites man to the Divine and draws him heavenwards.

H. A. NEWELL, Lieutenant Colonel, Indian Army (retired), London, England. Author of Topee and Turban, Footprints in Spain, etc.

CANTO XVI.

MAN'S GIFT OF FREE-WILL AND THE BURDEN OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY.

A maggior forza e a miglior natura
liberi soggiacete; e quella cria
la mente in voi, che 'l ciel non ha in sua cura.
Però, se 'l mondo presente disvia,
in voi è la cagione, in voi si cheggia. 79-83.

Being thus free, ye are subject to a greater power and to a better nature and that creates in you the mind which the heavens have not under their control. Therefore, if the world today goeth astray, in you is the cause, in you it must be sought.

COMMENT.

Without doing violence to Dante's immediate purpose in these lines one may lift the quotation from the context, forget the speaker, and dwell upon the profoundly moral character of the conception. Moral is the only word fitting the idea, recurring in human record in different form and colour wherever the articulate power of man has revealed his experience.

Yet a reader of Villani's "Chronicle" must marvel that anyone within the limits of Dante's life, within the fortuitous complexities of Italy, could have conceived, much less have believed, in any freedom of the human will. It is, perhaps, not an overstatement to say that this faith is the heart of Dante's elaborate doctrine. It is the citadel of reason. If heavy responsibility is the price of freedom, such a burden is inevitable in the sovereignty of the individual.

I cannot escape the conviction that Dante was profoundly influenced by the political cast of Franciscan thought, just as later publicists of that Order seem (I regret that I cannot here develop the idea) to have been encouraged by his writings. Briefly, one recurs to the lines in astonishment that a poet, six hundred years ago, could have expressed an idea so basic in the character of our own political and social life. Only without exercising intelligence, divulging both obedience and freedom, do we become victims of an intolerable mechanism. If we are honest with ourselves, if we do not hesitate to see, Dante's words have more meaning and vitality to-day than when he wrote them. The different idioms of church, laboratory and history agree.

WILLIAM PETER REEVES, PH.D., professor of English, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio.

THE NATURAL TENDENCY OF THE SOUL TO GOOD.

Esce di mano a lui che la vagheggia
prima che sia, a guisa di fanciulla
che piangendo e ridendo pargoleggia,
l' anima semplicetta che sa nulla,
salvo che, mossa da lieto fattore,
volentier torna a ciò che la trastulla. 85-90.

From the hands of Him who fondly loves her ere she is in being, there issues, like a sportive child, crying and laughing by turns, the simple, newly created soul who knows nothing save that, coming from the joyous Creator, she willingly turns to what delights her.

COMMENT.

The foregoing lines often come to my mind. I like them for their implication of joy and trustfulness.

JOHN P. RICE, PH.D., professor of Romance Languages, University of Buffalo, Buffalo, N. Y.

CANTO XVII.

MAN'S INNATE IDEA OF THE SUPREME GOOD.

Ciascun confusamente un bene apprende
nel qual si queti l' animo. 127-128.

Everyone in a confused sort of a way has a conception of a good, in which his mind can find rest.

COMMENT.

In this Dantean fragment is there not the intimate history of every human soul?

MARQUIS GUSTAVO BALSAMO-CRIVELLI, editor of Collezione di Classici Italiani, Turin, Italy.

CANTO XIX.

THE SIREN, THE SYMBOL OF PLEASURE.

"Io son" cantava, "io son dolce serena,
che i marinari in mezzo mar dismago;
tanto son di piacere a sentir piena! 19-21.

"I am," she sang, "I, the sweet Siren, who bewitch mariners in mid sea, so full am I of pleasantness to hear."

COMMENT.

These lines, with those that follow, seem to me the supreme heights of human music. Follow their music, and you will

ascend that heaven which the poets create out of their dreams for good or for evil.

Joel E. Spingarn, Ph.D., New York City. Author of A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance.

CANTO XX.

DANTE RECOGNIZES CHRIST HIMSELF IN THE PERSON OF THE POPE.

Veggio in Alagna intrar lo fiordaliso,
e nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto.
Veggiolo un' altra volta esser deriso;
veggio rinovellar l' aceto e 'l fele,
e tra vivi ladroni esser anciso. 86-90.

I see the fleur-de-lis entering Alagna, and, in His vicar, Christ made a captive, I see Him being mocked a second time; I see the vinegar and the gall renewed, and Himself slain (once more) between living thieves.

COMMENT.

These verses are all the more remarkable since, as everyone knows, Dante was both the political and personal enemy of Boniface VIII. The passage re-echoes that no less famous phrase of St. Catherine of Siena who was wont to speak of the Holy Father as "the sweet Christ on earth."

Doubtless my official position as the representative of the latest two Popes, first in the East Indies, later in Japan, and now in the United States, has enhanced my appreciation of this striking passage of Dante. It seems to sum up the full fervour and loyalty of the noble Florentine poet towards the "potere delle somme chiave" and to express most beautifully the Catholic belief that Christ lives in His Church, in Peter and in his successors.

Peter Fumasoni-Biondi, Archbishop of Dioclea, Apostolic Delegate, Washington, D. C.

CANTO XXI.

DANTE'S DESTINY.

"Se tu riguardi a' segni
che questi porta e che l' angel profila,
ben vedrai che coi buon convien ch' e' regni." 22-24 .

"If thou regardest the marks which this man bears and which the Angel traces, clearly wilt thou see that he must in due course reign among the just."

COMMENT.

Dante is an exile, a mendicant wounded by fortune's blows, but he will reign; he is tortured by "the usual cry of the blame being laid on the injured one" (Par. XVII, 53), but he will reign; he also is exposed to the illusion of "present things with their false pleasure" (Purg. XXXI, 34), but he will reign. Sorrow, calumny, temptation, all will be experienced. And yet to reign with wisdom and love will be the reward of him who resists the injustice, the falsity and the flattery of the world.

Paolo Arcari, professor in the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

CANTO XXII.

DANTE SEES IN THE WORDS OF VIRGIL AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF THE REDEEMER.

"Secol si renova;
torna giustizia e primo tempo umano,
e progenie scende da ciel nova." 70-72.

"The world is born again. Justice is returning and man's primeval time, and a new progeny descends from heaven."

COMMENT.

A wise progress is also reconstructive. It has an esteem for the proven values of bygone ages. There is to be a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.

Humphrey J. Desmond, LL.D., Milwaukee, Wis. Author of Curious Chapters of American History.

CANTO XXV.

STATIUS DISCOURSES ON THE INFUSION OF THE RATIONAL SOUL INTO THE BODY.

Guarda il calor del sol che si fa vino,
giunto a l' omor che de la vite cola. 77-78.

Look at the sun's heat, that is made wine when combined with the juice which flows from the vine.

COMMENT.

1—Here we have clear proof that Dante knew the calorific and, perhaps, the chemical power of the solar rays. He expresses his thought very precisely. He evidently knew that it was necessary to have sun to mature the sap of the vine ("the moisture that issues from the vine") in order to have wine; that heat was necessary for the various necessary chemical transformations. Dante, therefore, perceived intuitively what chemistry later in the nineteenth century demonstrated. His mental genius caused him to foresee what science could not demonstrate until seven centuries later.

LUIGI LUIGGI, Sc.D., Rome Italy. Senator of the Kingdom.

2—I have been profoundly impressed by those verses. A marvelous simile Dante here employs to explain a concept truly sublime. He wishes to demonstrate how the spirit of God infuses itself into sentient (animal) substance and transforms it into a rational, thinking soul. So the animal principle becomes a *spirito novo che ciò che trova attivo quivi, tira in sua sustanzia,* 72-74 (A new spirit which draws into its substance that which it finds active there.) It is no longer a mere animal principle that opens itself to the senses. That principle is now fecundated by the divine Spirit. So it has become a human soul that feels and reasons.

Al feto
l' articular del cerebro è perfetto,
lo motor primo a lui si volge lieto
sovra tant' arte di natura, e spira
spirito novo, di vertù repleto. 68-72.

(As soon as the organization of the brain is perfect in the embryo the First Mover turns to it, rejoicing over such handiwork in nature, and breathes into it a new spirit with virtue filled.)

This concept of divine infusion, penetrating the human soul is illustrated by the verses quoted at the head of this comment, which form a stupendous simile. The spirit of God creates the rational soul, communicating a divine spark to the sentient substance, just as the warm ray of the sun penetrates

the moisture of the vine and it becomes wine. The amazing concept and the trenchant simile, if they do not offer a motive of preference among the countless beauties of the Divine Comedy, produce at least a profound impression upon a meditative mind.

SALVATORE FRATELLINI, Spoleto, Umbria, Italy. Senator of the Kingdom.

CANTO XXVI.

ARNAUT DANIEL, PROVENÇAL POET AND TROUBADOUR, TYPIFIES THE JOY OF THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

Io mi feci al mostrato innanzi un poco,
e dissi ch' al suo nome il mio disire
apparecchiava grazioso loco.
El cominciò liberamente a dire:
"Tan m' abellis vostre cortes deman,
qu' ieu no me puesc ni voill a vos cobrire.
Ieu sui Arnaut, que plor e vau cantan;
consiros vei la passada folor,
e vei jausen lo joi qu' esper, denan.
Ara vos prec, per aquella valor
que vos guida al som de l' escalina,
sovenha vos a temps de ma dolor!"
Poi s' ascose nel foco che li affina. 136-148.

I moved forward a little to him who had been pointed out to me and said that for his name my desire was making ready a gracious place. He readily thus began to speak: "I am Arnaut who weep and go singing: contrite I see my past folly and, joyful, I see before me the day I hope for. Now I pray you by that Power which guides you to the summit of the stairway, at times be mindful of my pain." Then he hid himself in the fire that refines them.

COMMENT.

Purgatorio all through is for me greater than the Inferno or the Paradiso—even though its spirit is unintelligible without them and the line: "I am Arnaut who weep and go singing" is, in a way, the whole of Purgatorio. Purgatory is a place of tears, indeed, but of cleansing and joy too. Not Arnaut only, but all the souls there "weep and go singing."

CECIL F. LAVELL, PH.D., Grinnell, Iowa. Professor in Grinnell College, author of Italian Cities.

CANTO XXVII.

DANTE, PURGED OF SENSUALITY, IS QUALIFIED TO ASCEND TO THE EARTHLY PARADISE BUT HE MUST FIRST GO THROUGH THE FLAMES.

"Più non si va, se pria non morde,
anime sante, il foco: intrate in esso,
ed al cantar di là non siate sorde." 10-12.

No one can advance further, O sanctified souls, if first the fire bite not. Enter into it and to the singing beyond it be not deaf.

COMMENT.

If I were to choose any one line for my motto, I think it would be:—"Enter into it and to the singing beyond it be not deaf."

A most heartening line for the disheartened.

W. J. PAYLING WRIGHT, London, England. Author of Dante and the Divine Comedy.

DANTE PASSES THROUGH THE FLAME.

Sì com fui dentro, in un bogliente vetro
gittato mi sarei per rinfrescarmi,
tant' era ivi lo' ncendio sanza metro.
Lo dolce padre mio, per confortarmi,
pur di Beatrice ragionando andava,
dicendo: "Li occhi suoi già veder parmi."
Guidavaci una voce che cantava
di là; e noi, attenti pur a lei,
venimmo fuor là ove si montava. 49-57.

When I was within (the flame) I would willingly have cast myself into molten glass to cool me, so immeasurable was the burning there. My sweet Father (Virgil) to encourage me, still went on discoursing of Beatrice, saying: "Already I seem to behold her eyes." A voice that was singing on the far side, guided us on; and we, ever attentive to it, came forth at the place of ascent.

COMMENT.

I admire this passage for the striking comparison between the fire of Purgatory and the heat of molten glass.

B. H. MOLKENBOER, O. P. Huissen, Holland.

DANTE IN A PROPHETIC DREAM SEES LIA AND RACHEL, SYMBOLS OF THE ACTIVE AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.

Giovane e bella in sogno mi parea
donna vedere andar per una landa
cogliendo fiori; e cantando dicea:
"Sappia qualunque il mio nome dimanda
ch' i' mi son Lia, e vo movendo intorno
le belle mani a farmi una ghirlanda.
Per piacermi a lo specchio, qui m' adorno;
ma mia suora Rachel mai non si smaga
dal suo miraglio, e siede tutto giorno.
Ell' è de' suoi belli occhi veder vaga,
com' io de l'adornarmi con le mani;
lei lo vedere, e me l' ovrare appaga." 97-108.

Methought I saw in a dream a young and beautiful Lady walking over a plain, culling flowers and in her song she said: "Know whoever asketh my name that I am Lia and I go moving my fair hands around to make myself a garland. To please me at the mirror (i.e. God) here I adorn myself: but my sister Rachel never withdraws from her mirror and sits at it all day. She is fain to behold her fair eyes, as I to adorn myself with my hands: contemplation is her delight, work is mine."

COMMENT.

I like in this passage the extreme grace of the two women's silhouettes here evoked and I also admire the profound significance of the lines. It offers a comparison between the respective advantages and attractions of the active and the contemplative life. It seems to me that the passage thus combines the two incomparable prestiges of Dante: the poetic gift which transfigures everything he touches, the penetrating thought which attacks so boldly the great problems of his times and of all times.

BARON ERNEST SEILLIERE, president of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences of the Institute of France, Paris.

VIRGIL'S FAREWELL EXHORTATION TO DANTE.

Virgilio inverso me queste cotali
parole usò; e mai non furo strenne
che fosser di piacere a queste iguali.

Tanto voler sopra voler mi venne
de l' esser su, ch' ad ogni passo poi
al volo mi sentia crescer le penne.
Come la scala tutta sotto noi
fu corsa e fummo in su 'l grado superno,
in me ficcò Virgilio li occhi suoi,
e disse: "Il temporal foco e l' etterno
veduto hai, figlio; e se' venuto in parte
dov' io per me più oltre non discerno.
Tratto t' ho qui con ingegno e con arte;
lo 'tuo piacere omai prendi per duce;
fuor se' de l' erte vie, fuor se' de l' arte.
Vedi lo sol che in fronte ti riluce;
vedi l' erbetta, i fiori e li arbuscelli,
che qui la terra sol da sè produce.
Mentre che vegnan lieti li occhi belli
che, lacrimando, a te venir mi fenno,
seder ti puoi e puoi andar tra elli.
Non aspettar mio dir più nè mio cenno:
libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,
e fallo fora non fare a suo senno;
per ch' io te sovra te corono e mitrio." 118-142.

Such words did Virgil use to me and never were there gifts which could be equal in pleasure to these. So greatly did desire upon desire come over me to be above, that at every step thereafter, I felt the feathers growing stronger for my flight.

When the stairway was all beneath our feet, and we stood upon the topmost step Virgil fixed his eyes upon me and said: "My son, thou hast seen the temporal fire (of Purgatory) and the eternal (fire of Hell) and art come to a place where I, of myself, discern no further: I have brought thee here with my genius and my art: now take for thy guide thine own good sense: thou art (now) beyond the steep ways, beyond the narrow ones. Behold the Sun which is shining on thy forehead: see the tender grass, the flowers and the shrubs which here the ground of itself alone produces. Until in joy come the beautiful eyes (of Beatrice) which weeping, made me come to thee, thou mayest sit down and wander among them (the flowers and shrubs). Expect no further speech or sign from me. Free, upright and sound is thine own free will; it would be wrong not to act according to its judgment. Wherefore thee (as Lord) over thyself I crown and mitre.

COMMENT.

1—The line

Io te sovra te corono e mitrio,

has a special thrill for me, as expressing the truest goal I know of all secular and religious discipline.

JAMES H. HANFORD, PH.D., professor of English, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. Editor of Selections from Milton.

2—Perhaps I have a purely personal love for this passage. I have been a Master at Groton School for more than forty years, and these lines often come to my mind when a class is about to graduate and go out into the world.

WILLIAM AMORY GARDNER, Groton, Mass.

3—I choose that passage because it is so wonderfully condensed and pregnant, and yet so flowing and eloquent a summary of the whole poetry up to the point where it occurs; because it is a magnificent climax and because there is deep significance in the words *corono e mitrio*.

The crown is the symbol of worldly power; the mitre betokens the supremacy in her proper sphere of the Church Militant. There remains for Dante what he has not yet enjoyed but what will come to him through the guidance of Beatrice, namely the special illumination of God's grace. In view of Dante's Ghibellinism it is, I think, not too speculative to see so much meaning in these words *corono* and *mitrio*.

GEORGE MCLEAN HARPER, professor of English, University of Princeton, N. J. Author of The Legend of the Holy Grail.

CANTO XXVIII.

THE EARTHLY PARADISE.

LADY MATILDA AND DANTE.

E là m' apparve, sì com' elli appare
subitamente cosa che disvia
per maraviglia tutto altro pensare,

una donna soletta che si gia
cantando e scegliendo fior da fiore
ond' era pinta tutta la sua via.
"Deh, bella donna, che a' raggi d' amore
ti scaldi, s' i' vo' credere a' sembianti
che soglion esser testimon del core,
vegnati in volgia di trarreti avanti."
diss' io a lei "verso questa rivera,
tanto ch' io possa intender che tu canti.
Tu mi fai rimembrar dove e qual era
Proserpina nel tempo che perdette
la madre lei, ed ella primavera."
Come si volge con le piante strette
a terra ed intra sè donna che balli,
e piede innanzi piede a pena mette,
volsesi in su i vermigli ed in su i gialli
fioretti verso me non altrimenti
che vergine che gli occhi onesti avvalli;
e fece i prieghi miei esser contenti,
sì appressando sè, che 'l dolce suono
veniva a me co' suoi intendimenti.
Tosto che fu là dove l' erbe sono
bagnate già da l' onde del bel fiume,
di levar li occhi suoi mi fece dono.
Non credo che splendesse tanto lume
sotto le ciglia a Venere, trafitta
dal figlio fuor di tutto suo costume.
Ella ridea da l' altra riva dritta,
trattando più color con le sue mani,
che l' alta terra sanza seme gitta. 37-69.

And there appeared to me, even as there often appears quite suddenly something which, from very wonder, puts every other thought aside, a Lady, all by herself, who was going along singing and gathering flower after flower from those with which all her path was enameled. "Pray, fair Lady," I said to her "thou who art basking in the rays of love, if I may trust to those looks which are wont to be witnesses of the heart, be pleased to draw so far forward to this stream that I may hear what thou art singing. Thou makest me remember where and what was Proserpina at the time when her mother lost her, and she lost the flowers of spring." As a lady who is dancing turns herself, keeping her feet close to the ground and to each other and hardly sets one foot before the other, so towards me did she turn on the red and yellow flowerets, not otherwise than a virgin who lowers her modest eyes; and

she did satisfy my request, approaching so near that the sweet sound came to me and with it its meaning. As soon as she was where the grass is bathed by the waters of the fair stream, she vouchsafed to raise her eyes to me. I do not believe that so bright a radiance shone beneath the eyelids of Venus when she was transfixed by her son, quite contrary to his wont. She smiled from the right bank opposite, whilst with her hands she was gathering more flowers of many hues which that high land brings forth without seed.

COMMENT.

My choice of Dante's description of his first glimpse of the Earthly Paradise, as my favourite passage, is based on the direct personal appeal it has for me. The beautiful personification of goodness and innocence who welcomes Dante to Paradise is named Matilda. That was my mother's name. I lost my mother when she was still young and I was of such a tender age that I am unable to remember her. It pleases me to think of her in terms of Dante's Matilda and to hope that, like Dante, I shall some day be welcomed by her into Paradise.

JOHN A. RAY, PH.D., head of the department of Spanish and Italian. Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

MATILDA'S PRAISE OF THE EARTHLY PARADISE AND OF THE WATERS OF LETHE AND EUNOË.

"E saper dei che la campagna santa
dove tu se', d' ogni semenza è piena,
e frutto ha in sè che di là non si schianta.
L'acqua che vedi, non surge di vena
che ristori vapor che gel converta,
come fiume ch' acquista e perde lena;
ma esce di fontana salda e certa,
che tanto dal voler di Dio riprende,
quant' ella versa da due parti aperta.
Da questa parte con virtù discende
che toglie altrui memoria del peccato;
da l' altra d' ogni ben fatto la rende
Quinci Letè; così da l' altro lato
Eunoè si chima; e non adopra,
se quinci e quindi pria non è gustato:
a tutti altri sapori esto è di sopra." 118-133.

"And thou must know that the holy country where thou art, is full of every seed and has within itself fruit such as is not plucked yonder (on earth). The water which thou seest, wells not up from a spring that is restored by vapour which the frost condenses, like a river that gains and loses its volume, but it gushes forth from a fountain, constant and unfailing which by the will of God receives back again as much as it pours forth when divided into two streams. On this side it descends with power to take away from a person the memory of sin; on the other, it restores the memory of every good deed. On this side it is called Lethe, on the other Eunoë, and it is not effective, if it be not tasted first on this side and then on that. The savour of this water surpasses all others."

COMMENT.

It seems to be Dante's own special thought that while the Lethe, the oblivion of the ancients, should submerge the memory of sin, Eunoë, *sweet-minded-ness,* should brighten our memories of every beautiful thought, every kind and generous intention, every good and noble deed.

MERRITT STARR, L.L.D., Chicago, Ill., author of Dante Six Hundred Years After.

CANTO XXIX.

DANTE IS ENRAPTURED BY THE SPLENDOUR AND SWEET STRAINS OF SONG OF THE EARTHLY PARADISE (THE GARDEN OF EDEN).

La donna tutta a me si torse,
dicendo: "Frate mio, guarda e ascolta."
Ed ecco un lustro subito trascorse
da tutte parti per la gran foresta,
tal, che di balenar mi mise in forse.
Ma perchè 'l balenar, come vien, resta,
e quel, durando, più e più splendeva,
nel mio pensar dicea; "Che cosa è questa?"
E una melodia dolce correva
per l' aere luminoso; onde buon zelo
mi fè riprender l' ardimento d' Eva,
che là dove ubidia la terra e il cielo,
femmina sola e pur testè formata,
non sofferse di star sotto alcun velo;
sotto 'l qual se divota fosse stata,
avrei quelle ineffabili delizie
sentite prima e più lunga fiata,

Mentr' io m' andava tra tante primizie
de l' etterno piacer tutto sospeso,
e disioso ancora a più letizie,
dinanzi a noi, tal quale un foco acceso,
ci si fè l' aere sotto i verdi rami;
e 'l dolce suon per canti era già inteso. 14-36.

The Lady (Matilda) turned completely round towards me, saying: "My brother, look and listen." And behold, a sudden brightness flooded the great Forest on every side, so brilliant that it made me think perhaps, of lightning. But as lightning disappears as quickly as it comes, and this kept growing in splendour, in my mind I said: "What thing is this?" And a sweet melody was borne along through the luminous air; whereat a righteous indignation made me reprehend the temerity of Eve that she, a woman, alone, and but lately formed, should there, where Heaven and Earth were obedient (to the Divine Will), not have endured to remain under any veil (i.e. ignorance); under which, if she had been submissive, I should ere this have tasted those ineffable joys and for a longer time. Whilst I was moving on amid so many first-fruits of the eternal bliss, all enrapt and still yearning for greater joys, the air under the green boughs in front of us became even as a flaming fire and the sweet sound could now be distinguished as a chant.

COMMENT.

Original vividness leaps from these verses wherein is given with unsurpassable art a description of the Divine Forest. It is the prelude to the imposing pageant of the Church Militant.

ARMANDO SANTANERA, Casale, Monferrato, Italy. University Professor. Author of San Francesco in Dante.

THE POET INVOKES THE MUSES FOR ASSISTANCE TO PUT INTO VERSE HIS AMAZING VISION OF THIS GREAT PAGEANT.

O sacrosante Vergini, se fami,
freddi o vigilie mai per voi soffersi,
cagion mi sprona ch' io mercè vi chiami.
Or convien che Elicona per me versi,
e Urania m' aiuti col suo coro
forti cose a pensar mettere in versi. 37-42.

O Sacred Virgin Muses, if for you I have endured hunger, cold or vigils, the occasion now urges me to claim my reward for them. Now

must Helicon pour forth for me, now must Urania with her choir aid me to put into verse things too great for thought.

COMMENT.

1—The part of the great Commedia, that impresses me most, both for workmanship and pure delight of the spirit, is the last six cantos of Purgatorio.

PAUL CLAUDEL, French Ambassador to the United States, author of The Art of Poetry, Letters to a Doubter, etc.

2—It is a common thing for poets to invoke the Muses in the preamble of their more pretentious compositions or in the highest and most studied passages of their poems. But in these verses of Dante there is something far above the mere imitation of Virgil and of Horace, which finds echo in the *hunger,* the *cold* and *vigils* of the Epistle to the Pisos, 413.

> *Multa fecit tulitque puer, sudavit et alsit,*
> *abstinuit venere et vino.* (Ars Poetica.)

Dante's words, quoted above, give us an epitome of his whole life. They tell us of the intensity of his resolution to apply himself so much that he may be able to say of Beatrice what has never been said of any woman. They bring to mind the sublime realization of that resolution, through all the years of thought and study, which culminated in the ineffable vision of the apparition of Beatrice, now transhumanized into supernatural truth, and coming from Heaven at the halting of the symbolic procession. There in the luminous Forest which crowns the summit of the sacred mountain, Dante and Beatrice, amid a shower of flowers and in the presence of legions of angels meet, are reconciled, confer and speak as protagonists of the highest psychological, religious and historical mysteries. And so is perfected the multiform life that vibrates in the scenes of the Divine Comedy—scenes which the poet studied so successfully to set to verse not simply on one but on every page of his work.

Verses without vigorous thought are worthless. The artifice of style, indeed, is simply powerless unless it is sustained and enlivened by worthy material. Even if the conception con-

cerns the sublime and the heroic it will also, in many cases, include the humble and the simple and these thoughts, to be deathless, must come forth with such a choice of ideas and such splendour of images that they will rise above their common imagery.

So Dante is great even in little things because he is the man of vigorous thought. For us, then, the study of the divine poem becomes the school, not only of the most exquisite, artistic pedagogy but also of marvelous concepts and sublime admonitions, urging us to conquer even the most common things of civil, moral and religious life. This is the purpose of the Comedy. The work, indeed, carries the seal of the poet of righteousness who has impressed his genius upon a plot developed through the three kingdoms of the Hereafter.

To the divine poet, as to an ancient summit, Manzoni, as a youth, turned to acquire that sentiment and meditation which have the leaven of all vigorous thought. In his love of science and of faith, in his appreciation of the beautiful as well as in his restraint of art, Manzoni is the disciple and emulator of Dante, because he is a man of heart. So the words of his letter addressed (February 9, 1806) to Fauriel sound like a comment on Dantean thought. "I believe that meditation on what is and on what should be, with the painful feeling which is born of the contrast, is the fountain of the best poetic or prose works of our times."

Dante, in his day, with a new style, meditated on and felt what is and what should be in this world. Good and evil were always the absorbing objects of his mind and heart. So he conceived an intense love of the moral renovation of man both in public and private life. This love dictated to him inwardly what he made known in the sublime song that created an epic. It comes to us from another world, almost from the tomb of the poet and from the heart of the Middle Ages. It causes the Italian Parnassus to rise to such a height, that its author, the new Homer, the man of vigorous thought, is enthroned high up there, the Lord of most lofty song.

Giovanni Busnelli, S. J., Theologian and member of the editorial staff of Civiltà Cattolica, Rome, Italy.

THE FIRST PART OF THE DIVINE PAGEANT.

Poco più oltre, sette alberi d' oro
falsava nel parere il lungo tratto
del mezzo ch' era ancor tra noi e loro;
ma quand' i' fui sì presso di lor fatto,
che l' obietto comun, che il senso inganna,
non perdea per distanza alcun suo atto,
la virtù ch' a ragion discorso ammanna,
sì com' elli eran candelabri apprese,
e ne le voci del cantare 'osanna. 43-51.

A little further on, the long tract of space which was still between us and them, gave a false illusion of their being seven golden trees. But when I had come so near to them that the common object, which deceives the sense of vision no longer lost each individual detail, the faculty which prepares for reason its object of judgment, distinguished them as candlesticks and the chant of the voices as "Hosanna."

THE APPROACH OF THE CHARIOT (THE CHURCH MILITANT) DRAWN BY THE GRIFFIN (CHRIST).

Sotto così bel ciel com' io diviso,
ventiquattro seniori, a due a due,
coronati venien di fiordaliso.
Tutti cantavan: "Benedicta tue
ne le figlie d'Adamo, e benedette
sieno in etterno le bellezze tue!"
Poscia che i fiori e l' altre fresche erbette
a rimpetto di me da l' altra sponda
libere fuor da quelle genti elette,
sì come luce luce in ciel seconda,
vennero appresso lor quattro animali,
coronati ciascun di verde fronda.
Ognuno era pennuto di sei ali;
le penne piene d' occhi; e li occhi d' Argo,
se fosser vivi, sarebber cotali.
A descriver lor forme più non spargo
rime, lettor; ch' altra spesa mi strigne,
tanto che a questa non posso esser largo;
ma leggi Ezechiel che li dipigne
come li vide da la fredda parte
venir con vento e con nube e con igne;

e quali i troverai ne le sue carte,
tali eran quivi, salvo ch' a le penne
Giovanni è meco e da lui si dipartè:
Lo spazio dentro a lor quattro contenne
un carro, in su due rote, triunfale,
ch' al collo d' un grifon tirato venne.
Esso tendea in su l' una e l' altra ale
tra la mezzana e le tre e tre liste,
sì ch' a nulla, fendendo, facea male.
Tanto salivan che non eran viste;
le membra d' oro avea quant' era uccello,
e bianche l' altre, di vermiglio miste. 82-114.

Beneath so fair a sky, as I describe, came four and twenty ancients, two by two, crowned with flower-de-luce. All were singing. "Blessed thou among the daughters of Adam and blessed throughout eternity be thy loveliness." After the flowers and other fresh herbage in front of me on the other bank had been left clear by those Elect people, even as in the heavens star rises after star, so came behind them four living beings, each one crowned with verdant foliage. Each was plumed with six wings, the feathers full of eyes; and the eyes of Argus, were they living, would be such as these. To describe their forms, no more verses do I waste, Reader, for other charges so constrain me, that in this I cannot be diffuse. But read Ezechiel who depicts them as he saw them coming, from the cold region, with whirlwind, with cloud, and with fire; and such as thou wilt find them in his pages, such were they here, save that in the matter of wings Saint John's narrative agrees with mine and differs from him.

The space between these four contained a triumphal Chariot on two wheels, which came drawn at the neck of the Griffin. And He extended both His wings aloft between the middle, and the three and three bands, so that He did harm to no one of them by cleaving it. So far did the wings rise that they were lost to sight: His members were of gold so far as He was bird, and the rest were white mixed with red.

THE VIRTUES AND THE OTHER ATTENDANTS.

Tre donne in giro da la destra rota
venian danzando: l'una tanto rossa
ch' a pena fora dentro al foco nota;
l' altr' era come se le carni e l' ossa
fossero state di smeraldo fatte;
la terza parea neve testè mossa;

e or parean da la bianca tratte,
or da la rossa; e dal canto di questa
l' altre toglien l' andare e tarde e ratte.
Da la sinistra quattro facean festa,
in porpora vestite, dietro al modo
d' una di lor ch' avea tre occhi in testa.
Appresso tutto il pertrattato nodo
vidi due vecchi in abito dispari,
ma pari in atto ed onesto e sodo.
L' un si mostrava alcun de' famigliari
di quel sommo Ipocrate che natura
a li animali fè ch' ell' ha più cari;
mostrava l' altro la contraria cura
con una spada lucida e aguta,
tal, che di qua dal rio mi fè paura.
Poi vidi quattro in umile paruta;
e di retro da tutti un vecchio solo
venir, dormendo, con la faccia arguta.
E questi sette col primaio stuolo
erano abituati, ma di gigli
dintorno al capo non facean brolo,
anzi di rose e d' altri fior vermigli:
giurato avria poco lontano aspetto
che tutti ardesser di sopra da' cigli.
E quando il carro a me fu a rimpetto,
un tuon s' udì, e quelle genti degne
parvero aver l' andar più interdetto,
fermandosi ivi con le prime insegne. 121-154.

Three ladies, at the right wheel, came onward dancing in a circle; one so ruddy that hardly would she have been distinguishable in the fire: the second was as if her flesh and bones had been made out of emerald; the third seemed snow just fallen. And now they seemed to be led by the one in white, now by the one in red, and from the song of the one (leading), the others took their step slow and swift. On the left side four clad in purple made festival, following the measure of one of them who had three eyes in her head.

Behind all this group described, I beheld two old men, unlike in dress, but like in demeanor dignified and grave. The one (Saint Luke) showed himself as one of the disciples of Hippocrates whom nature made for the creatures she holds most dear; the other (Saint Paul) showed the contrary care, with sword so shining and sharp that it caused me fear on this hither side of the stream. Then I saw four of humble aspect, and behind all, an aged man, coming in a trance but with countenance keen. And

these seven were robed like the first band; but they had not a garland of lilies about their heads, but rather one of roses and of other red flowers. A sight of them at a little distance would have made one swear that they were all aflame above their brows. And when the chariot was opposite to me, thunder was heard and these worthy people seemed to have their further advance forbidden, halting there, as did the first ensigns.

COMMENT.

The consummate poetical genius of Dante is nowhere better exemplified than in the cantos that so powerfully describe the symbolic pageant of God's revelations to man in the Old and New Testaments and in the Catholic Church. The lover of poetry and the student alike herein find imagery, erudition, and Scriptural references with their perfect development fitted as superb mosaic into one composite poetical and theological picture. The vision seen in Purgatorio is based in great part upon the Apocalypse of St. John and the prophet Ezekiel.

"Amid Apocalyptic splendors, preceded by twenty-four ancients, who are the writers of the Old Law, surrounded by the four prophetic animals, symbolizing the four Evangelists, and followed by seven other personages, in whom we recognize the authors of the other books of the New Law, Christ advances under the form of a griffin, whose terrestrial body and aerial wings denote the hypostatic union of the two natures, human and divine. He draws a car, emblem of the Church, on which stands a lady clothed in symbolic garments; this is Theology: three nymphs on her right hand, and four upon her left, represent the theological and the cardinal virtues passing on together with harmonious steps. As the hymns resound, sung by the angels, the train progresses and approaches the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which, according to a beautiful tradition, has become the tree of salvation, the redeeming cross. The car remains attached to this tree, and, while the glorious lady, with her seven companions, is left to guard it, the griffin departs with the ancients: Christ, quitting the earth, leaves the Church under the care of knowledge and virtue." (Ozanam.)

The allegories pictured by Dante's genius, here and elsewhere, were the result of his absorbing knowledge of and affection for the divinely revealed doctrines of the Catholic

Church. Certainly the unnumbered Scriptural references in these cantos effectively dispose of the charge of medieval ignorance of Holy Writ and the chained Bible Myth.

Dante's vision in the Earthly Paradise resolves itself into the poetical description of this great Church of God in all her majesty ever going forth to meet the penitent sinner, showing her divine beauty and presenting to him the record of her revelations. She is the guardian of the mysteries of God. In her lavish hand she holds the means of grace whereby those who seek salvation are eternally justified. Manifestations of God through the Prophets, the Apostles and, finally, Christ Jesus Himself, are all hers to utilize in her all important labour for man's justification.

Almost as a necessary corollary of her association with humankind, trials are a portion of the lot of this Church Militant and Dante sees them all visioned in the Mystic Procession.

"Suddenly, an eagle falls like lightning upon the tree, from which he tears the bark, and upon the car, which bends beneath his weight. Then comes a fox which finds it way within, and then a portion is torn off by a dragon that issues from the gaping earth. Thus far it is easy to recognize the persecutions of the Roman emperors which so harried the Church, the heresies by which it was desolated, and the schisms by which it was torn. Soon, the eagle reappeared, less menacing but not less dangerous; he shook his plumes above the sacred car, which speedily underwent a monstrous transformation. From divers parts of it arose seven heads armed with ten horns; a courtesan was seated in the midst; a giant stood at her side, exchanging with her impure caresses which he interrupted to scourge her cruelly. Then, cutting loose the metamorphosed car, he bears it away, and is lost with it in the depths of the forest. Is not this again the Church, enriched by the gifts of princes who have become her protectors, sadly marred in appearance, sundry of her members defiled by the taint of the seven capital sins, and herself ruled over by unworthy pontiffs? Is not this the court of Rome, exchanging criminal flatteries with the temporal power, which flatteries are to be followed by cruel injuries, when the Holy See, torn from the foot of the cross of the Vatican, is transferred to a

distant land, on the banks of a foreign river? But these ills will not be without end nor without retribution. The tree that lost and that saved the world cannot be touched with impunity, and if the Church has been made militant here below, it is with the liability of suffering from passing reverses, but also with the assurance of final victory." (Ozanam.)

Although with Ozanam we cannot "acquiesce in the severity of these judgments, dictated oft by anger and penned in sorrow," still the human element of the Church stands boldly etched on her history from Peter at Rome to Clement at Avignon. Yet her divine commission is not shadowed, her destiny is eternal, her powers rest assured, her triumph certain; because her memory is long and can recall with joy the words that fell from lips divine in Galilean valley in the long ago, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

The universal import of the Church's message finds particular application in this vision, when Dante himself, in a great and personal scene, exhibits repentance and secures through the Church of God his own reconciliation. Into the aura of her beauty he has come; voluntarily he receives the ministrations of salvation, voluntarily he accepts her conditions for regeneration, and is received as every sinner 'doing penance' into her great fold where Shepherds watch with joy for such returning souls.

CATHOLIC in conception is this vision; for Dante here is MAN, the representative of all mankind in a state of misery and seeking redemption. CATHOLIC is it too in doctrine; for clear against the background of the pageant's beauty and thundering through the words of the pageant's actors appears the Catholic Church's universal condition for justification of a penitent sinner—contrition, confession, and satisfaction with consequent practice of virtue.

Essentially the Divine Comedy is an epic of redemption, a drama of the vicissitudes of earthly pilgrimage, where "short while shalt thou be a forester," until "thou shalt be with me forevermore a citizen of that Rome where Christ is Roman."

Daniel E. Horgan, assistant Rector, St. Joseph's Church, Troy, N. Y.

CANTO XXX.

BEATRICE APPEARS.

La gente verace
venuta prima tra 'l Grifone ed esso,
al carro volse sè come a sua pace;
e un di loro, quasi da ciel messo,
'Veni, sponsa, de Libano' cantando
gridò tre volte, e tutti li altri appresso.
Quali i beati al novissimo bando
surgeran presti ognun di sua caverna,
la revestita carne alleluiando;
cotali in su la divina basterna
si levar cento, ad vocem tanti senis,
ministri e messaggier di vita etterna.
Tutti dicean: *'Benedictus qui venis!'*
e fior gittando di sopra e dintorno,
'Manibus o date lilia plenis!'
Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno
la parte oriental tutta rosata,
e l' altro ciel di bel sereno adorno;
e la faccia del sol nascere ombrata,
sì che, per temperanza di vapori,
l' occhio la sostenea lunga fiata:
così dentro una nuvola di fiori
che de le mani angeliche saliva
e ricadeva in giù dentro e di fori,
sovra candido vel cinta d' uliva
donna m' apparve, sotto verde manto
vestita di color di fiamma viva.
E lo spirito mio, che già cotanto
tempo era stato che a la sua presenza
non era di stupor, tremando, affranto,
sanza de li occhi aver più conoscenza,
per occulta virtù che da lei mosse,
d' antico amor sentì la gran potenza.
Tosto che ne la vista mi percosse
l' alta virtù che già m' avea trafitto
prima ch' io fuor di puerizia fosse,
volsimi a la sinistra col rispitto
col quale il fantolin corre a la mamma,
quando ha paura o quando egli è afflitto.

per dicere a Virgilio: "Men che dramma
di sangue m' è rimaso che non tremi;
conosco i segni dell' antica fiamma." 7-48.

That truthful band (the personifications of the books of the Old Testament) who had come first between the griffin and it (the septentrion of candlesticks) turned to the Chariot, as to their peace. And one of them, as though sent from Heaven, sang three times, *"Veni, Sponsa, de Libano"* and all the others after him. As the blessed at the last trump will arise swiftly, each from his tomb, singing *Alleluia* with recovered voice, so, upon the divine Chariot, *ad vocem tanti senis* (at the voice of so great an ancient), rose up a hundred ministers and messengers of life eternal. All were saying: *"Benedictus qui venis"* (Blessed thou that cometh") and, while they were scattering flowers above and around, *"Manibus o date lilia plenis"* ("Oh, give lilies with full hands") (Aeneid VI 884).

I have ere now seen at dawn of day the eastern sky all rosy, while the opposite heaven was beautiful with fair clear sky, and the face of the sun rising shaded, so that, from the tempering of mists, the eye could endure it for a long while. Thus within a cloud of flowers which rose from the hands of angels and fell showering down again within and without (the chariot), there appeared to me a Lady with a crown of olives over a white veil, wearing under a green mantle a robe of the colour of living flame. And my spirit although so long a time it stood in her presence and was uncrushed though trembling with awe, without having further knowledge by my eyes, through some occult virtue that emanated from her, felt the great potency of the ancient love. As soon as smote upon my sight that sublime influence which already had transfixed me ere I was out of my boyhood, I turned to the left with the confidence with which a little child runs to his mother when he is frightened or when he is troubled, to say to Virgil: "There is not so much as a drop of blood left in my body that does not tremble; I recognize the signs of the ancient flame."

COMMENT.

1—From the whole poem I must choose as perhaps my favourite this passage where Beatrice approaches, enters the car drawn by the Griffin, whose wings reach heaven, between the virgins and the evangelists, and upon the thunder one intones *Veni Sponsa.*

Edward Hutton, London, England. Author of Ravenna.

2—This composition is perfection itself. It combines in a faultless union the real and the unreal, the dream and the

desire, the eternal and the temporary, spirit and matter. It is the whole of life with its vagueness, sweetness and suffering, and in and through and over all is the consoling vision of the Hereafter.

PIETRO VERRUA, professor, Municipal Institute of Padua, Italy, author of L'Invocatione alla Morte.

3—I never fail to respond to the drama of the meeting with Beatrice. The quaint precision of the description goes deep; it recognizes, as do the chantings, incense, pictures and processions of the Catholic Church, the value and validity and the deep human need of sensory guides to the most intangible of all spiritual experiences.

RODERICK MARSHALL, Leonia, N. J.

4—To me a most thrilling bit of description is that of this passage in which the Poet sees Beatrice rising from a cloud of flowers upheld by angel hands, and likens her to the sun rising through the morning mists. I select this passage for three reasons: first, for its high dramatic value; secondly, for its fine imagery; thirdly, for the emotion which interpenetrates it.

WALTER TAYLOR FIELD, Chicago, Ill. Author of Rome, editor of The Abbey Classics.

5—My favourite passage extends from verse 5 this canto to verse 90 the next canto. Here is the most resplendent proof of the historical reality of Beatrice, even though she now serves as a symbol in the simple allegory of the poem. The passage indeed is the most esthetically beautiful part of the whole poem and it begins with a comparison (XXX, 22-27), that is no less original than truly heavenly—a perfect correspondence with the great concept which inspired it. The passage has an excellence so charmingly simple that it has no need of clarification. He who does not understand and feel its beauty would hear in vain any word that would attempt the exposition of the verses.

> "A cui natura non lo volle dire,
> nol dirien mille Ateni e mille Roma."

A. FIAMMAZZO, Udine, Italy. Contributor to Il Giornale Dantesco.

REPROOF OF DANTE BY BEATRICE.

Ma Virgilio n'avea lasciati scemi
di sè, Virgilio dolcissimo patre,
Virgilio a cui per mia salute die' mi:
nè quantunque perdeo l'antica matre
valse a le guance nette di rugiada,
che, lacrimando, non tornassero atre.
"Dante, perchè Virgilio se ne vada,
non pianger anco, non pianger ancora;
chè pianger ti conven per altra spada."
Quasi ammiraglio che in poppa ed in prora
viene a veder la gente che ministra
per li altri legni, e a ben far l' incuora;
in su la sponda del carro sinistra,
quando mi volsi ad suon del nome mio,
che di necessità qui si registra,
vidi la donna che pria m' appario
velata sotto l' angelica festa,
drizzar li occhi ver me di qua dal rio.
Tutto che 'l vel che le scendea di testa,
cerchiato de le fronde di Minerva,
non la lasciasse parer manifesta,
regalmente ne l' atto ancor proterva
continuò come colui che dice
e 'l più caldo parlar dietro reserva;
"Guardaci ben! Ben son, ben son Beatrice.
come degnasti d' accedere al monte?
non sapei tu che qui è l' uom felice?"
Li occhi mi cadder giù nel chiaro fonte;
ma veggendomi in esso, i trassi a l' erba,
tanta vergogna mi gravò la fronte.
Così la madre al figlio par superba,
com' ella parve a me; perchè d' amaro
sente il sapor de la pietade acerba.
Ella si tacque; e li angeli cantaro
di subito: *'In te, Domine, speravi';*
ma oltre *pedes meos* non passaro. 49-84.

But Virgil had left us deprived of his person, Virgil, my most beloved father, Virgil to whom I for my salvation had given myself; not all that our ancient mother (Eve) lost could prevent my cheeks (so recently) washed with dew from turning dark again with tears.

"Dante, weep not yet because Virgil goes away, weep not yet, for thou must weep by another sword." Like an admiral who takes his stand at stern and at bow to inspect the crews of the other ships and encourages them to great things, so, upon the left side of the Chariot, when I turned at the sound of my own name which, from necessity, is recorded here, I saw the Lady who to me had appeared first veiled beneath the angelic festival, directing her eyes towards me across the stream. Although the veil which fell from her head crowned with Minerva's leaves, did not allow her to be seen distinctly, she went on queenlike in bearing yet stern, like one who speaks and holds back the most burning words for the last. "Look at me well, I am, indeed, I am, indeed, Beatrice. How hast thou deigned to approach this mountain. Didst thou not know that here man is happy?" Mine eyes drooped down to the limpid fountain; but seeing myself reflected in it, I withdrew them to the grass, so great a shame did weigh down my brow. As to the son the mother appears with awe, so she seemed to me, because the savour of severe pity tasteth somewhat of bitterness. She was silent and at once the angels began to sing: *"In te, Domine, speravi"* but beyond (the words) *"pedes meos,"* they didn't go.

COMMENT.

Human emotion is nowhere in literature, so far as I know, more sharply and movingly set in action than in the lines 19-84.

HARRY MORGAN AYERS, professor, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, New York City.

DANTE, DEEPLY MOVED, HEARS BEATRICE STILL FURTHER REPROACH HIM FOR HIS LAPSES.

Ella, pur ferma in su la detta coscia
del carro stando, a le sustanze pie
volse le sue parole così poscia:
"Voi vigilate ne l' etterno die,
sì che notte nè sonno a voi non fura
passo che faccia il secol per sue vie;
onde la mia risposta è con più cura
che m' intenda colui che di là piagne,
perchè sia colpa e duol d' una misura.
Non pur per ovra de le rote magne,
che drizzan ciascun seme ad alcun fine
secondo che le stelle son compagne,

ma per larghezza di grazie divine,
che sì alti vapori hanno a lor piova,
che nostre viste là non van vicine,
questi fu tal ne la sua vita nova,
virtualmente, ch' ogni abito destro
fatto averebbe in lui mirabil prova.
Ma tanto più maligno e più silvestro
si fa 'l terren col mal seme e non colto,
quant' elli ha più di buon vigor terrestro,
Alcun tempo il sostenni col mio volto;
mostrando li occhi giovanetti a lui,
meco il menava in dritta parte volto.
Sì tosto come in su la soglia fui
di mia seconda etade e mutai vita,
questi si tolse a me, e diessi altrui.
Quando di carne a spirto era salita,
e bellezza e virtù cresciuta m' era,
fu' io a lui men cara e men gradita;
e volse i passi suoi per via non vera,
imagini di ben seguendo false,
che nulla promission rendono intera.
Nè l' impetrare ispirazion mi valse,
con le quali ed in sogno e altrimenti
lo rivocai; sì poco a lui ne calse!
Tanto giù cadde, che tutti argomenti
a la salute sua eran già corti,
fuor che mostrarli le perdute genti.
Per questo visitai l' uscio de' morti,
e a colui che l' ha qua su condotto,
li preghi miei, piangendo, furon porti.
Alto fato di Dio sarebbe rotto,
se Letè si passasse, e tal vivanda
fosse gustata sanza alcuno scotto
di pentimento che lacrime spanda." 100-145.

She, still standing motionless on the aforesaid side of the Chariot, then directed her words to the compassionate angels thus: "Ye watch in the eternal day so that neither night nor sleep steals from you one step which the world may take along its ways: wherefore my answer must be more detailed so that he who is weeping yonder over the stream may understand me, and thus his sin and contrition may be of equal measure!"

"Not only through the working of the mighty spheres that direct

each seed to its true end, according as the stars influence it, but through the bounty of divine graces which have for their rain vapours so lofty that the powers of vision cannot reach there, this man had such potentialities of good in his new life that every right quality in him would have effected in him wondrous fruition. But ranker and wilder becomes the untilled soil sown with bad seed, the better is the nature of the land. For some time I sustained him with my countenance; showing my youthful eyes to him I led him with me to the right goal. As soon as I was on the threshold of my second age and had changed life (earthly for heavenly), this man took himself from me and gave himself to others.* When I had ascended from flesh to spirit, and beauty and virtue had increased in me, I was less dear to him and less pleasing: and he turned his steps along a way not true, following after false images of good, which to no promise give its due fulfillment. Nor did it avail me to obtain inspirations, with which to call him back both in dreams and otherwise, so little did he heed them. So low did he fall that all means for his salvation were now insufficient save that of showing him the lost people. For this purpose I visited the gateway of the dead, and to him (Virgil) who has conducted him up hither, my prayers were borne with weeping. God's high decree would be broken, if Lethe should be passed, and such viands should be tasted without some reckoning of penitence that is poured forth in tears."

COMMENT.

1—In these lines, spoken by Beatrice, is summed up, it seems to me, the story of the Divine Comedy and the much-discussed problem of Dante and his love. Granted that, as Longfellow and others would have it, there is too much of self-abasement and self-disparagement in these lines. Dante was a herald of the Renaissance, sharing its pagan attitude toward women. Son of the Church though he was and believer

* The nature of Dante's delinquency is still a matter of dispute among commentators. A great division exists among them as to whether the words: "He gave himself to others," are to be interpreted as implying carnal sin or the pursuit of worldiness that brings about a state of indifference to the needs of the soul. So, too, there is wide disagreement as to whether the word *pargoletta* (Purg. XXXI, 59), a young damsel, is to be accepted in the literal sense as meaning the object of amatorious passion upon the part of Dante, or to be understood symbolically as standing for some intellectual pursuit, for instance, poetry, as the author's son, Pietro, thought. "If then, we are to see in the *Pargoletta* of the *Commedia* anything more than a woman," concludes Grandgent, "it is more than likely that she represented to Dante's repentant mind, a whole mode of life and thought, a practical, imaginative and artistic materialism inconsistent with the spiritual ideal he always cherished." Dante's Divina Commedia, p. 270. Cf. Dante by Jefferson Butler Fletcher, pp. 41-81.

in the Christian mysteries, it was the pagan poet who saw and desired Beatrice. The dictum applied by Brunetière to a later poet, applies also to Dante: he was a Christian in the depths of his soul; he was pagan in all the reach and range of his senses. From Beatrice he was to learn that woman may have a higher destiny in the divine ordering of things than the mere gratification of the senses. How long and bitter was the lesson the poem bears testimony—and so, most profoundly, does the face of Dante.

Anna E. Bagstad, professor of Modern Languages, Pacific University, Forest Grove, Ore.

2—The greatness of a poet is in proportion to his ability to treat of the eternal sentiments of the human soul. Nobody has sung of love, this great marvel of our hearts, this incomparable flower of our nature, in verses more sublime than has Dante.

The passage, quoted above, is the proof of this truth. The most exalted love becomes a conscience which obliges man to blush for his moral lapses and to grieve over his infidelities to the ideal. Love for Beatrice became for Dante an ideal of purity and dignity. The verses which terminate this canto, to which one must add the first lines of the next canto, seem to me to express, with rare intensity, this sublime conception of love, such as God intended it to be. Dante indeed, is the epic poet of Christian love. For that reason I admire him and place him in the first rank of the great geniuses of humanity.

Leon Cristiani, Dean of the Catholic Faculty of Literature, Lyons, France.

CANTO XXXI.

BEATRICE MOVES DANTE TO CONFESSION OF SIN.

"O tu che se' di là dal fiume sacro,"
volgendo suo parlare a me per punta,
che pur per taglio m' era paruto acro,
ricominciò, seguendo sanza cunta,
"dì, dì se questo è vero: a tanta accusa
tua confession conviene esser congiunta."

Era la mia virtù tanto confusa,
che la voce si mosse, e pria si spense
che da li organi suoi fosse dischiusa.
Poco sofferse; poi disse: "Che pense?
Rispondi a me; chè le memorie triste
in te non sono ancor da l' acqua offense."
Confusione e paura insieme miste
mi pinsero un tal 'si' fuor de la bocca,
al quale intender fuor mestier le viste.
Come balestro frange, quando scocca
da troppa tesa, la sua corda e l' arco,
e con men foga l' asta il segno tocca,
sì scoppia' io sott' esso grave carco,
fuori sgorgando lacrime e sospiri,
e la voce allentò per lo suo varco.
Ond' ella a me: "Per entro i mie' disiri,
che ti menavano ad amar lo bene
di là dal qual non è a che s' aspiri,
quai fossi attraversati o quai catene
trovasti, per che del passare innanzi
dovessiti così spogliar la spene?
e quali agevolezze o quali avanzi
ne la fronte de li altri si mostraro,
per che dovessi lor passeggiare anzi?"
Dopo la tratta d' un sospiro amaro,
a pena ebbi la voce che rispuose,
e le labbra a fatica la formaro.
Piangendo dissi: "Le presenti cose
col falso lor piacer volser miei passi,
tosto che 'l vostro viso si nascose."
Ed ella: "Se tacessi o se negassi
ciò che confessi, non fora men nota
la colpa tua: da tal giudice sassi!
Ma quando scoppia de la propria gota
l' accusa del peccato, in nostra corte
rivolge sè contra 'l taglio la rota.
Tuttavia, perchè mo vergogna porte
del tuo errore, e perchè altra volta,
udendo le serene, sie più forte,
pon giù il seme del piangere ed ascolta:
sì udirai come in contraria parte
mover dovieti mia carne sepolta.

Mai non t' appresentò natura o arte
piacer, quanto le belle membra in ch' io
rinchiusa fui, e sono in terra sparte;
e se 'l sommo piacer sì ti fallio
per la mia morte, qual cosa mortale
dovea poi trarre te nel suo disio?
Ben ti dovevi, per lo primo strale
de le cose fallaci, levar suso
di retro a me che non era più tale.
Non ti dovea gravar le penne in giuso,
ad aspettar più colpi, o pargoletta
o altra vanità con sì breve uso.
Novo augelletto due o tre aspetta;
ma dinanzi da li occhi di pennuti
rete si spiega indarno o si saetta." 1-63.

"O thou who art on the far side of the sacred stream" she began again without delay, turning her discourse with the point to me, which even with the edge had seemed sharp to me. "say, say whether this is true; to such accusation thy confession must be joined." My faculties were so confused that the voice moved but died away before it could come forth from its organs. She tarried a little, then said: "What thinkest thou? Answer me, for the sad memories in thee have not as yet been effaced by the water" (of Lethe). Confusion and fear mingled together forced from my lips a "yes" so feeble that eyes were needed for the understanding of it.

As a crossbow breaks its cord and the bow, when it is discharged at too much tension, and with diminished force the arrow hits the mark, so did I burst out under that heavy load, pouring forth tears and sighs, and my voice died away in its passage. Whereupon she said to me. "Within those desires inspired by me, that were leading thee to love the Good beyond which there is nothing whereto man may aspire, what pits didst thou find athwart thy path, or what chains didst thou find, that thou must strip thyself of the hope of passing onward? And what allurements or what advantages displayed themselves in the faces of others that thou must needs walk towards them?" Heaving a bitter sigh, scarcely had I the voice to make an answer and only with an effort could my lips give it form. Weeping I said: "The things of the present life with their false pleasure turned away my steps as soon as your face was hidden." And she answered: "If thou hadst been silent, or hadst denied that which thou dost now confess, thy fault would not be less manifest, before a Judge, to whom it is known. But when self-accusation of sin bursts from the mouth, in our court the grindstone turns back against the edge. In order, however, that thou mayest bear shame

for thy transgression, and that another time thou mayest be stronger on hearing the Sirens, put away the source of thy weeping and listen, so shalt thou hear how my buried flesh should have led thee in a contrary direction."

"Never did Nature or Art present to thee delight so great, as did the fair members wherein I was inclosed, and they are crumbled into dust, and if this highest delight thus failed thee by my death, what other mortal thing should then have drawn thee into loving it? In truth at the first arrow of deceitful things, thou shouldst have lifted thyself to me, who was no longer of such sort. Nor should thy wings have weighed thee downward to await more harm from either a damsel young or other vanity of so brief use. Only a fledgeling awaits two or three shots; but in vain is the net spread, the arrow shot before the eyes of the full-plumaged birds."

COMMENT.

This canto appeals to me because of its supreme beauty and dramatic exposition, also for its intense power of arousing emotion and of educating the mind soundly. Especially am I moved when I read here Dante's description of Beatrice and listen to his exaltation of love which rises above whatever is vulgar.

FRANCESCO ZANOTTO, Rome, Italy. Domestic Prelate to His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, professor of Literature in the Roman Seminary.

DANTE'S CONTRITION AND HIS IMMERSION INTO LETHE.

Di penter sì mi punse ivi l' ortica,
che di tutte altre cose qual mi torse
più nel suo amor, più mi si fè nemica,
Tanta riconoscenza il cor mi morse,
ch' io caddi vinto; e quale allora femmi,
salsi colei che la cagion mi porse
Poi, quando il cor virtù di fuor rendemmi.
la donna ch' io avea trovata sola
sopra me vidi, e dicea: "Tiemmi! tiemmi!"
Tratto m' avea nel fiume infin la gola,
e tirandosi me dietro sen giva
sovresso l' acqua lieve come scola.
Quando fui presso a la beata riva,
"Asperges me" sì dolcemente udissi,
che nol so rimembrar, non ch' io lo scriva.

La bella donna ne le braccia aprissi;
abbracciommi la testa e mi sommerse
ove convenne ch' io l' acqua inghiottissi.
Indi mi tolse, e bagnato m' offerse
dentro a la danza de le quattro belle;
e ciascuna del braccio mi coperse. 85-105.

The nettle of repentance so stung me that of all those other things that one which turned me aside in loving it, now became to me the most abhorred. So much remorse gnawed my heart that I sank down overcome and what I then became is known to her who furnished me with the cause. Then when my heart restored to me the sense of outward things, I saw above me the Lady (Matilda) whom I had found wandering alone and she was saying: "Hold on to me, hold on to me." She had drawn me into the stream up to the throat and dragging me after her, was speeding over the water as lightly as a shuttle. When I was near the blessed shore I heard the words, *Asperges me,* so sweetly sung that I cannot remember it, much less describe it. The beautiful Lady opened her arms, clasped my hand, and immersed me so that I had to swallow the water. Then she took me still dripping, and brought me within the dance of the four beautiful ones (the Cardinal Virtues), and each of them covered me with her arm.

COMMENT.

The reproaches uttered by Beatrice to Dante and the repentance of the Poet make one of the most dramatic passages in the Divine Comedy. These verses seem to me to be also the central point of the poem, the one from which radiate the deepest perspectives.

Alexandre Messeron, Lawyer, Brest, France. Author of Les Énigmes de la Divine Comédie.

CANTO XXXII.

DANTE IS RENDERED TEMPORARILY BLIND BY HIS LOOKING TOO FIXEDLY AT BEATRICE.

Tant' eran li occhi míei fissi e attenti
a disbramarsi la decenne sete,
che li altri sensi m' eran tutti spenti.
Ed essi quinci e quindi avean parete
di non caler—così lo santo riso
a sè traéli con l' antica rete!—;

quando per forza mi fu volto il viso
ver la sinistra mia da quelle dee,
perch' io udi' da loro un "Troppo fiso!";
e la disposizion ch' a veder èe
ne li occhi pur testè dal sol percossi,
sanza la vista alquanto esser mi fee. 1-12.

So fixed and intent were my eyes on satisfying their ten years' thirst, that my other senses were all extinct; and they (my eyes), on one side and the other, had a wall of disregard, so much did the holy smile (of Beatrice) draw them to itself with the old net; when my face was perforce diverted towards my left hand by those goddesses (the Theological Virtues) because I heard from them (an admonition: Thou lookest) "Too fixedly." And that condition of the visual faculties which exists in eyes just now smitten by the sun, caused me to lose my sight for a while.

COMMENT.

I agree with Carlyle in thinking this, my favourite quotation from Dante, "among the purest utterances of affection, perhaps the very purest, that ever came out of a human soul."

HOMER M. BYINGTON, American Consul General, Naples, Italy.

TO DANTE THE TRANSFIGURATION ON MOUNT THABOR IS A FORETASTE OF THE FULL GLORY OF CHRIST IN HEAVEN.

A veder de' fioretti del melo
che del suo pome li angeli fa ghiotti
e perpetue nozze fa nel cielo. 73-75.

To see some of the flowerets (proofs of divinity) of the apple-tree (Christ) which makes the Angels greedy for its fruit and makes perpetual marriage feast in Heaven.

COMMENT.

To my mind this is one of the most singular tercets, certainly the most moving, in the whole Divine Comedy. It describes how the three Apostles were led to witness the Transfiguration and saw in it a proof of the divinity of Christ.

No one, I believe, has ever translated the sublime object of his faith into an image so full of ingenuous joy, so fresh and so vivacious and, at the same time, so ardent and delightful. It is

like the fancy of a little child, kneeling in a country church. I am moved to tears at the thought that such sweetness could have come from the tragic soul of Dante.

FRANCESCO CHIESA, Lugano, Italy. Author of Tempo di Marzo.

BEATRICE PROPHESIES DANTE'S ETERNAL SALVATION.

"Qui sarai tu poco tempo silvano:
e sarai meco sanza fine cive
di quelle Roma onde Cristo è romano." 100-102.

"Here shalt thou be for a little while a forester; and for evermore thou shalt be with me a citizen of that Rome whereof Christ is a Roman."

COMMENT.

It is Dante's supreme tribute to the Roman heritage that Rome itself should become for him the symbol of Eternity, and the passage is the glorification of "romance" in the highest and truest significance of the word.

EDMUND G. GARDNER, LITT.D., writer, London, England. Author of Dante's Ten Heavens, Dante and the Mystics, etc.

CANTO XXXIII.

AFTER DRINKING OF THE WATER OF EUNOË, DANTE IS MADE FIT TO ASCEND TO PARADISE.

Io ritornai da la santissima onda
rifatto sì come piante novelle
rinovellate di novella fronda,
puro e disposto a salire a le stelle. 142-148.

Renewed I returned from the most holy waters, like young trees renovated with new foliage, pure and fit to mount unto the stars.

COMMENT.

1—These sublime verses are a source of great comfort to me because they perfectly express the possibility man has of freeing himself from every sin and purifying himself from

every stain, so that he may be renewed in the spirit of his mind and thus aspire to supreme heights.

GIUSEPPE BEVIONE, Senator of the Kingdom, Milan, Italy.

2—The verse; "Pure and fit to mount unto the stars," lends itself admirably to the practical, the ethical, and the religious interpretations beloved by Dante. It voices man's innate desire to soar ever upward, even unto Heaven,—which may well be the meaning of the Biblical statement that we are made in His image.

If we interpret "puro" in the objective and passive sense of "made pure and prepared for the task in view;" and if we furthermore interpret "disposto" in the subjective and active sense of a desire to soar,—then the verse carries an added appeal because of its universal significance and application, and because it expresses one of our natural, human yearnings.

MARIO E. COSENZA, PH.D., professor of Italian, the College of the City of New York.

PARADISO.

In the opening years of the nineteenth century men of letters in the English speaking world were as a rule, better acquainted with the "Inferno" and, with very few exceptions, preferred it to the other two parts of the "Commedia." Hallam, to quote one instance, writes as follows: "Fame has justly given the preference to the 'Inferno,' which displays throughout a more vigorous and masterly conception."

As the "Commedia," both in the original and in the translation of Cary, began to be more widely known and more deeply studied this opinion ceased to be held so generally. "I do not agree," writes Carlyle (in 1840), "with much modern criticism in greatly preferring the 'Inferno' to the other two parts of the 'Commedia.' . . . The 'Purgatorio' and the 'Paradiso,' especially the former . . . is more excellent than it."

Carlyle probably preferred the "Purgatorio" on account of the idea of "character building" which pervades its symbolism. Those students of the "Commedia," however, most deeply penetrated by the spirit of Christianity have almost invariably valued most highly of all the "Paradiso." Such was the view taken by Gladstone; such also was the opinion of Giosue Borsi. Ruskin (Stones of Venice) writes: "Every line of the 'Paradiso' is full of the most exquisite and spiritual expressions of Christian truth, and this part of the poem is only less read than the 'Inferno' because it requires far greater attention, and, perhaps, for its full enjoyment, a holier heart."

It is to the "Paradiso" that a Catholic writer would naturally turn when asked to indicate his favourite passage from Dante. I am aware—pace Benedetto Croce—that the motives actuating this choice are not so much aesthetic as theological. What strikes me most forcibly about the "Paradiso" is the intense joy pervading every canto. "Post Dantis Paradisum," wrote Cardinal Manning, "nihil restat nisi visio Dei."

It is the wonderful similes used by Dante to express the spirit of joy animating the souls of the blest, which remain

most firmly fixed in one's mind. We will take one example. On ascending to the planet Mercury, Dante and Beatrice behold on every side, like sparkling points of light, the souls of the blest circling around them and drawing swiftly closer.

Come 'n peschiera ch' è tranquilla e pura
traggonsi i pesci a ciò che vien di fori
per modo, che lo stimin lor pastura,
sì vid' io ben più di mille splendori
trarsi ver noi, ed in ciascun s' udia:
"Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori."
E sì come ciascuno a noi venia,
vedeasi l' ombra piena di letizia
nel fulgor chiaro che di lei uscia. Par. V, 100-108.

(As in a fish-pond still and clear, the fish are drawn to whatever drops from without in such a manner that they deem it their food, so did I see more than a thousand splendours drawing towards us, and from every one was heard. "Lo, here is one who will increase our loves." And as each one came to us, the shade was seen full of joy in the radiant effulgence issuing from it.)

Every fresh soul admitted to the Beatific Vision causes by its entry into Paradise, exquisite pleasure to those who have already gone to their reward: the outward manifestation of their joy is the increased light glowing out from each soul.

This phenomenon of the joy of Paradise is depicted by Dante again and again, as the poet and his guide ascend from sky to sky on their heavenly journey. The most diverse similes, derived from aspects of light, from sounds of music, from the motion of dancing, are employed. Each simile, in the words of Benedetto Croce, "forms in itself an exquisite little lyric."

H. B. L. Hughes, professor, British Institute, Florence, Italy.

CANTO I.

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH ARE FULL OF THE MAJESTY OF GOD.

La gloria di colui che tutto move
per l' universo penetra e risplende
in una parte più e meno altrove. 1-3.

The glory of Him who moves everything, penetrates throughout the universe and shines in one part more and in another less.

COMMENT.

1—These words in their compactness express most strikingly and beautifully a belief about God that all men have who believe in God at all.

CHARLES A. DOWNER, PH.D., head of the Department of Romance Languages in the College of the City of New York. Author of a First Course in French.

2—I prefer this passage because not only in the material world but also in the world of thought, everywhere—in the sciences as in arts, in history as in economics, in poetry as in philosophy—everywhere I have seen a ray, an image, a reflection, a breath of the Divinity.

EMANUELE SELLA, professor of Economics in the University of Genoa, Italy. Author of Essays on Dante's Monarchia, and of La Rima Sacra.

3—In our garden I was watching the sun go down in a blaze of glory, beyond the majestic Hudson, beyond the Palisades, and the only fitting remark, the only one expressing my peaceful state and pensive mood seemed to me to be the passage quoted above. And I recited it aloud and slowly, scanning the lines and meditating upon its profound meaning, singing it almost like a hymn to God. That is what I do every time on such an occasion, and with still greater joy at the sight of a similarly glorious sunrise. This tercet seems to me to bespeak all the love of God and for God, all the power of the Creator and the mystery of His creatures, all His wisdom and revelation. Probably it was such a passage that made De Sanctis describe the Divina Commedia as a pensive world; and probably Dante wrote the verses here quoted, at sunrise, forgetful of evil, and lifting up his heart to God, mysterious even in His most spectacular revelation.

ANGELO LIPARI, Associate Professor of Italian, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

DANTE BEHOLDS IN HEAVEN THINGS IMPOSSIBLE TO RECORD.

Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende
fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire
nè sa nè può chi di là su discende. 4-6.

I have been in that Heaven (the Empyrean) which of His light receives the most, and I have seen things which he who descends from there, has neither the knowledge nor the power to relate.

COMMENT.

In these lines, strikingly similar to those of St. Paul (II Cor. XII, 4), Dante indicates the ultimate end of life, towards which end all beings *normally* and more or less consciously strive, though of the many who are called to it, few are chosen. To those who, unlike orientalists and theosophists, really understand the oriental doctrines, this, the Beatific Vision of Christians, is identical with the Yoga of the Hindus, the Return to the Root of the Taoists, the Holy Palace of the Kabbala, the Pax Profunda of the medieval Rosicrucians (of whom no descendants remained in Europe after 1648). This it is which all the world should seek.

GASTON DE MENGEL, professor of Metaphysics, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France.

THE BEATIFIC VISION IS INEFFABLE.

Perchè appressando sè al suo disire,
nostro intelletto si profonda tanto
che dietro la memoria non può ire. 7-9.

Because our intellect, drawing near to its own desire (God), attains to such a depth that memory cannot follow.

COMMENT.

The passage that I find most frequently singing in the ears of memory, is the one quoted above, but if you ask me why, I hardly know except that it reaches the depths of human nature and gives beautiful expression to the spirit of mysticism from which we can none of us escape.

CHARLES M. BAKEWELL, PH.D., professor of Philosophy, University of Yale, New Haven, Conn. Author of Source Book in Ancient Philosophy.

LITTLE CAUSES AND GREAT EFFECTS.

Poca favilla gran fiamma seconda. 34.

A mighty flame may follow a tiny spark.

COMMENT.

From the great mass of Dante's wisdom, I give that line as my favourite text. I have seen many oaks grow from acorns in the mental and moral world.

MELVIL DEWEY, LL.D., Lake Placid Club, Essex Co., N. Y. Author of Decimal Classification and Relative Index.

BEATRICE UNFOLDS TO DANTE THE ENTIRE WONDERFUL ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE.

Ond', ella, appresso d' un pio sospiro,
li occhi drizzò ver me con quel sembiante
che madre fa sovra figlio deliro,
e cominciò: "Le cose tutte quante
hanno ordine tra loro, e questo è forma
che l' universo a Dio fa simigliante.
Qui veggion l' alte creature l' orma
de l' etterno valore, il qual è fine
al quale è fatta la toccata norma.
Ne l' ordine ch' io dico sono accline
tutte nature, per diverse sorti,
più al principio loro e men vicine;
onde si muovono a diversi porti
per lo gran mar de l' essere, e ciascuna
con istinto a lei dato che la porti.
Questi ne porta il foco inver la luna;
questi ne' cor mortali è permotore;
questi la terra in sè stringe e aduna:
nè pur le creature che son fore
d' intelligenza quest' arco saetta,
ma quelle c' hanno intelletto ed amore.
La provedenza, che cotanto assetta,
del suo lume fa'l ciel sempre quieto
nel qual si volge quel c' ha maggior fretta;
e ora lì, come a sito decreto,
cen porta la virtù di quella corda
che ciò che scocca drizza in segno lieto.
Vero è che come forma non s' accorda
molte fiate a l' intenzion de l' arte,
perch' a risponder la materia è sorda;
così da questo corso si diparte
talor la creatura, c' ha podere
di piegar, così pinta, in altra parte." 100-132.

Whereupon she, after a sigh of compassion, bent her eyes towards me, with such an expression as a mother casts upon her delirious child. And she began: "All things whatsoever have order amongst themselves: and this is that form which makes the universe like unto God. In this order the higher creatures see the unity of Eternal Goodness, which is the end for which the aforesaid decree was made. Into that order that I mention all natures are inclined according to their different destinies, some near to their Principle and some remote from it. Wherefore they move to diverse ports over the vast sea of being, each one doing so with the instinct given to it to bear it on. This instinct carries fire up toward the moon; this is the motor in mortal hearts; this is the attraction that draws the earth together and holds it together."

"This bow impels not only creatures that are void of intelligence, but also those that are endowed with intellect and love. The Providence that regulates all this, forever with His own light, keeps tranquil that heaven within which is revolving the sphere with the greatest speed. And thither now, as to a goal decreed, we are being borne by virtue of that bowstring which aims at a joyous mark and attains all at which it shoots. It is true that often the form does not accord with the artist's purpose, because the material is deaf to respond; so from this course the creature sometimes departs, because it has power, though thus impelled, to incline to another direction."

COMMENT.

This passage in which Beatrice explains to Dante the order of created beings, is one of the most striking parts of the Divine Comedy. Nothing more sublime than order can be imagined. It is so sublime that it makes the universe like unto God who is perfect order. Take away order and the universe becomes chaos.

Rational creatures see the order of the universe under the guidance of the Providence of God who is the end of all created beings. Order, then, dominates the physical world as it must also prevail in the realm of the Spirit. But Beatrice makes it clear (verses 127-132) that order divinely established does not suppress man's free will. He abuses this great gift and hence the character (forma) of the product does not agree with the intention of the Divine Artist, since the created factor, on which God must work, becomes irresponsive. Too often man who should tend naturally to Heaven, surrenders his free will to passions and bends to the earth. By so doing

he goes against his own nature and cheats it of its supreme end which is God. In conclusion, Beatrice, in a marvelous synthesis, embraces all created beings. Contemplating them from the standpoint of order, she indicates their varied and harmonious movements according to the destiny of each being. Man's destiny is God. The movements of the rest of creatures supply them with the means of attaining the end of their creation.

This vast and most comprehensive picture entitles this passage to be numbered among the most striking of the Divine Comedy.

NAZZARANO FERRATA, Canonist, Rome, Italy.

CANTO II.

WARNING TO THE READER.

O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
desiderosi d' ascoltar, seguiti
dietro al mio legno che cantando varca,
tornate a riveder li vostri liti:
non vi mettete in pelago, chè, forse,
perdendo me rimarreste smarriti. 1-6.

O ye who in your little boat, eager to hear, have followed behind my ship as it goes singing on its way, turn back to see again your own shores: do not put out upon the mighty deep, lest losing me, ye might be left astray.

COMMENT.

This passage contains a wealth of imagery and hidden allegory.

HENRI SCOTT, Philadelphia, Pa. Formerly leading basso of the Metropolitan Opera Company.

DANTE CERTAIN THAT HE CAN SING OF HEAVEN, ALTHOUGH THE SUBJECT-MATTER HAD NEVER BEEN TREATED BEFORE IN POESY.

L' acqua ch' io prendo già mai non si corse:
Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo.
e nove Muse mi dimostran l' Orse. 7-9.

The water that I sail was never traversed before; Minerva inspires me and Apollo guides me, and the nine Muses point out to me the Bears.

COMMENT.

The poet who speaks with so much assurance as to the novelty of his work, is the same one who in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* had been the precursor of comparative grammar. Was there ever a revolutionary more conscious and prophetic?

ALBERT COUNSON, Ghent, Belgium. Professor, University of Ghent. Author of Le Reveil de Dante.

THE HEAVEN OF THE FIXED STARS IMPARTS TO OTHER HEAVENLY BODIES THE IMPRESS OF ITS MOVING INTELLIGENCE.

E'l ciel cui tanti lumi fanno bello. 130.

And the Heaven that so many lights make beautiful.

COMMENT.

I am about to begin the publication of the Encyclopedia of Encyclopedias in eighteen volumes of a thousand pages in quarto. The motto of the undertaking will be the words quoted above. The choice of this motto was suggested by a thought I had some time ago, of publishing a great Dante Encyclopedia with the assistance of an Italian editorial group. The "Ciel" would have been wonderful with many lights because of the collaboration of many geniuses. For certain reasons I had to abandon the idea of the Encyclopedia, and so the staff was not organized.

In planning a new and very original Encyclopedia I will retain the motto so full of meaning and pass it on to this monumental work.

A. F. FORMIGGINI, editor and publisher, Rome, Italy.

CANTO III.

IN THE SPHERE OF THE MOON, PICCARDA TELLS DANTE THAT THE SPIRITS THERE DESIRE NO MORE EXALTED PLACE IN HEAVEN.

"Ma dimmi: voi che siete qui felici,
disiderate voi più alto loco
per più vedere e per più farvi amici?"

Con quelle altr' ombre pria sorrise un poco;
da indi mi rispuose tanto lieta,
ch' arder parea d'amor nel primo foco:
"Frate, la nostra volontà quieta
virtù di carità, che fa volerne
sol quel ch' avemo, e d' altro non ci asseta.
Se disiassimo esser più superne,
foran discordi li nostri disiri
dal voler di colui che qui ne cerne;
che vedrai non capere in questi giri,
s' essere in carità è qui necesse,
e se la sua natura ben rimiri.
Anzi è formale ad esto beato esse
tenersi dentro a la divina voglia,
per ch' una fansi nostre voglie stesse;
sì che, come noi sem di soglia in soglia
per questo regno, a tutto il regno piace
com' a lo re ch' a suo voler ne invoglia.
E 'n la sua volontade è nostra pace:
ell' è quel mare al qual tutto si move
ciò ch' ella cria e che natura face."
Chiaro mi fu allor come ogni dove
in cielo è paradiso, etsi la grazia
del sommo ben d' un modo non vi piove. 64-90.

"But tell me, ye who are happy here, do ye desire a higher place in order to see more, or to make for yourselves more friends?" With those other shades she first smiled a little, then answered me with such gladness that she seemed to glow with the ardour of first love: "Brother, the virtue of Charity contents our will, and makes us wish only for that which we have, and for aught else we have no thirst. Were we to desire to be more exalted, our desires would not be in accord with the will of Him who assigns us to this abode, which (desires) thou wilt see can have no place in those spheres, if to be in charity is here a necessity, and if thou reflect well upon its nature. Nay, the formal cause of our blessed state is to hold itself within the divine Will, whereby our own wills are themselves made one (with God's will). So that as we are ranged from degree to degree throughout the realm, to the whole does the realm give joy, even as it does to the King who fills us with His will; and in His will is our peace; that Will is the ocean to which moves everything that It creates or that nature makes." Clear was it then to me that everywhere in Heaven is Paradise, although the grace of the Supreme Good doth not rain there after the one way.

COMMENT.

My favourite passage is Piccarda's reply to Dante as he questions her relative to the satisfaction felt by the inhabitants of the different stages of Paradise. Piccarda had been a nun, but, for political reasons, had been forced by her brother to leave the convent and marry. This act it was, though wholly involuntary on her part, that had caused her to break her convent vows and thus had given her the lowly position in Paradise.

It was in the Heaven of the Moon, the lowest of the ten, that the Poet met her, one of several shadows in human form. Though related to Piccarda by marriage, and though he had formerly known her, Dante did not recognize her in her present surroundings, owing to the "something divine" that beamed in her "countenance." He addressed her. In reply Piccarda reveals her identity and thus tells why she is there. Upon this reply, Dante more eager than ever, puts the question he so much wants answered—the question quoted at the head of this comment. The answer is one of the finest, most meaningful, soul-satisfying passages of the whole poem and is well followed by Dante's own fine comment.

A. J. LADD, Chicago, Ill. Formerly professor of Education, University of North Dakota, author of Dante and his Divine Comedy.

SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD THE SECRET OF PEACE.

E 'n la sua volontade è nostra pace. 85.

And in His Will is our peace.

COMMENT.

1—This is one of the lines from Dante by which I live.

KATHARINE LEE BATES, LL.D., LITT.D., Wellesley, Mass. Author of English Religious Drama.

2—The line is not only a rule of life, but a creed, a faith in which one may live and die.

HOWARD JUDSON HALL, Los Altos, Calif. Assistant Professor of English, Stanford University. Author of Types of Poetry.

3—This is my favourite passage and it is so because it is the sum of Catholic philosophy.

WILLIAM T. COSGRAVE, President of the Irish Free State.

4—This quotation is my favourite because it is music in its rhythm and words, and the very essence of religion.

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS, PH.D., LL.D., New Haven, Conn. Professor of English, Yale University. Author of The Advance of English Poetry, Human Nature in the Bible, etc.

5—The line is so perfect in its beauty and so satisfying and comprehensive in its philosophy that it goes with me always.

JAMES CLOYD BOWMAN, LITT.D., Marquette, Mich. Head of the English Department of the Northern State Normal College. Author of The Gift of White Roses.

6—This line seems to me to hold the glory and the secret of Dante's music and inspiration, as a drop of dew holds all the glory of the sun.

MAURICE BARING, London, England. Author of The Puppet-Show of Memory.

7—This line of Dante has given me most comfort, for its spirit of trustful submission, the only spirit that makes bearable the hardest blows that fall upon us.

CHARLES H. GRANDGENT, L.H.D., LITT.D., Cambridge, Mass. Professor of Romance Languages, Harvard University. Author of The Power of Dante, Discourses on Dante, etc.

8—This verse expresses with the simplicity of Dante's art, the willingness of the good man to live and work under the conditions of his lot.

ALLAN H. GILBERT, PH.D., professor, Duke University, Durham, N. C. Author of Dante's Conception of Justice.

9—This one great line lingers longest and sweetest in my memory. To the imperative, *Fiat voluntas tua,* it yields its own lovely affirmation.

E. H. Blakeney, Winchester, England.

10—This passage seems to me to be the best commentary on the prayer, "Thy will be done," since our will finds blessedness in its conformity to His will.

Henry D. Sedgwick, Cambridge, Mass. Author of Dante.

11—In my opinion this is the most beautiful line not only in Dante but in all literature. For brevity, truth and beauty of expression I know of none to equal it.

Geoffrey Garrod, Belfast, Ireland. Author of Goethe, Dante's Faust and other Essays.

12—This passage is beautiful and goes to the source of our faith and true life in the Heavenly Father. The "pace" is *il principio della nostra beatitudine,* as a commentator says.

Jukichi Oga, Osaka, Japan. Author of Dante no Teiseiron to Gendai no Heiwaundo, and twenty-five other works on Dante.

13—Consulting Dante is much like consulting the Bible, one is so apt to find just the thing that helps. In my own case the lines quoted above are lines that will always stay with me.

Curtis H. Walker, Ph.D., professor of History, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn. Contributor to Rice Institute Pamphlet on Dante.

14—This is perhaps the most perfect line of poetry in any language, completely satisfying in cadence and, as Matthew Arnold has pointed out, in truth, beauty and high seriousness.

James I. Wyer, Ph.D., Albany, N. Y. Director of the New York State Library. Author of Annual Bibliography of Education.

15—I have taught Dante at Harvard University and at Radcliffe College and I have lingered long over all the verses

of the Divine Commedia. If I must express a preference I confess my liking the line quoted above.

J. D. M. Ford, Ph.D., Cambridge, Mass. Author of The Old Spanish Sibilants.

16—In God's will is love and justice, and it is in love and justice that man must find his peace. So the whole problem of progress consists in bringing the will of man into harmony with the universe.

Edwin Markham, Litt. D., L.H.D., West New Brighton, N. Y. Author of The Man with the Hoe.

17—This verse is beautiful as well as strong. It makes peace positive, real, alive, instead of negative—the mere absence of war. It goes to the deep source of all true life in the Father of our spirits—D.O.M.

Henry van Dyke, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L., Princeton, N. J. Author of The Spirit of America, Companionable Books, etc.

18—I frequently think of these words of Dante, the profound truth of which is equalled by their beauty of sound or form; but while truth is not affected by translation into our rougher English, the beauty of form is almost totally detroyed.

Lawrence T. Abbott, Litt.D., New York City, Editor of The Outlook, Author of Impressions of Theodore Roosevelt.

19—Like the *Imitation of Christ,* this line has upheld me personally in the greatest affliction of life. It contains the essence of Dante's philosophy; *Sua Voluntade,* Divine Love, constitutes the metaphyical part, *nostra pace,* the ethical-psychological part. Harmony with the Creator's plan brings about genuine morality and gives us true peace.

Adolf Dyroff, Professor of Philosophy, University of Bonn, Germany.

20—I have often used this verse to encourage myself. Is there a higher wisdom? Nothing can hurt me, nothing can hold me back, whatever the labour and the shocks of life, for

His will for me is all that Infinite Love can encompass. In that peace *dormiam et requiescam.*

PAUL L. BLAKELY, S.J., New York City. Associate Editor of America.

21—This line seems to me to compress all of Dante's thought. Peace is only in conformity with the Divine Will here and hereafter. The consummation of the universe in perfect union with that Will is the end of creation. The purpose of the Divine Comedy is to show the free creature how to attain that end in the embrace of the Divine Love, "L'Amor che muove il sole e l' altre stelle."

CONDÉ B. PALLEN, Ph.D., LL.D., New York City, Author of The Philosophy of Literature.

22—As I let my mind soar through the infinite spaces of Dante's Vision, and watch and listen for what may fling itself up from the abyss or down from the Empyrean, a great voice, stern but sweet, seems to assert the preeminence of its message: "E 'n sua volontade è nostra pace." That is enough. Can anything be greater than that? It is great philosophy, great theology, great poetry. Does it not carry the burden of Dante's essential message? In His will is our peace; in the denial of His will is our confusion. How profound and how far-reaching is the thought. We find our peace in submission to the Divine Will. The only way of peace is in following the guidance of the Divine will. Can we suppose that the intense energy of Dante's nature will be content with the negative peace of submission and obedience? Is there not also latent in his phrase the idea that we find our truest peace in an activity in harmony with the activity of the Divine Will? If so, then we have here at once the submissive obedience of a proud spirit and the immortal energy of an active spirit. It is the highest human will seeking to be in harmony with a higher than human will. All this is said in words which seem to open a great light upon the understanding, to elate and vivify the imagination, to fill us with a sense of spiritual beauty, to fall like music upon the ear.

W. H. CRAWSHAW, LL.D., Litt.D., Dean, Colgate University, Hamilton, N. Y. Author of The American College.

THE WILL OF GOD.

"E 'n la sua volontade è nostra pace:
ell' è quel mare al qual tutto si move
ciò ch' ella cria e che natura face." 85-87.

"And in His Will is our peace: that Will is the ocean to which moves everything that It creates or that nature makes."

COMMENT.

1—To me these verses appeal particularly because I believe the central thought of our religion lies in the peace of God which passeth understanding.

DWIGHT MARVIN, Editor of The Record, Troy, N. Y.

2—I like this passage because it seems to me to express, better than any other lines of Dante or of any other poet, one of the greatest ideas of the Christian religion.

T. S. ELLIOT, London, England. Editor of The Monthly Criterion.

3—The first line seems to sum up the whole meaning of the poem. The souls in Inferno are those of men who definitely refused to make His will their peace; those in Purgatorio are executing His will to their peace: those in Paradiso have definitely accepted it as the blessed secret of eternal life. The last four words seem almost to hint at some "evolutionary" process, which though apparently the work of nature, is in reality due in its origin to that Will Divine from which all creation took its rise.

EDWARD TATHAM, F.G.A., Canon and Prebendary of Lincoln, Claxby, Alford, England.

CANTO IV.

THE APPARENT INJUSTICE OF HEAVEN FURNISHES A MOTIVE TO HOLD TO FAITH.

Beatrice to Dante:

"Parere ingiusta la nostra giustizia
ne li occhi de' mortali, è argomento
di fede e non d' eretica nequizia. 67-69.

"That our (i.e. divine) justice should appear unjust in the eyes of mortals, is itself an argument of faith, and not of heretical iniquity."

COMMENT.

This passage I chose for its penetration and breadth. It covers and disarms all radicalism and encourages honest freedom of thought.

E. K. RAND, Ph.D., Professor, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Joint Author of Dante Alighieri's Operum Latinorum Concordiae.

ONLY IN DIVINE TRUTH CAN THE MIND FIND THE REPOSE PROMISED BY ITS OWN NATURE.

Io veggio ben che già mai non si sazia
nostro intelletto, se 'l ver non lo illustra
di fuor dal qual nessun vero si spazia.
Posasi in esso come fera in lustra,
tosto che giunto l' ha; e giugner puollo:
se non, ciascun disio sarebbe frustra.
Nasce per quello, a guisa di rampollo,
a piè del vero il dubbio; ed è natura
ch' al sommo pinge noi di collo in collo. 124-132.

I clearly see that our mind is never satisfied unless it is illumined by the Truth, outside of which nothing true extends. Therein it lays itself to rest, like a wild beast in its lair, as soon as it has reached it; and it can reach it, otherwise every desire would be in vain. Because of this (constant desire for truth) doubt, in likeness of a shoot, springs up at the foot of truth; and it is nature which from height to height urges us on to the summit.

COMMENT.

1—This passage I consider a masterly refutation of agnosticism and unbelief; a striking definition of the source of truth, as being nothing less than divine reality; a bold statement that from this truth all truth proceeds. I admire the poet's splendid confidence in man's power to know God, and his finding the explanation of man's unquenchable thirst for knowledge in this power.

FLORENCE TRAIL, Frederick, Md. Author of The Scholar's Italy.

2—The desire to scale the heights to which our mind devotes its greatest effort, is such that, after the goal has been reached and the truth attained, a doubt arises beside it, in order to urge us on to new heights more difficult and more bold. Human life, in its striving for perfection, must know neither rest nor fatigue.

Only thus, by always courageously meeting the doubt that arises alongside the truth, the doubt that spurs us on to higher goals, is human life worth the living.

ANTONIO CASERTANO, President of the Chamber of Deputies, Rome, Italy.

JOY UPON THE ACQUISITION OF TRUTH.

Beatrice mi guardò con li occhi pieni
di faville d' amor così divini,
che, vinta, mia virtute diè le reni,
e quasi mi perdei con li occhi chini. 139-142.

Beatrice looked at me with eyes full of the sparks of love, and so divine, that my power, vanquished, was put to flight, and with eyes downcast I almost lost consciousness.

COMMENT.

Dante here refers to Beatrice as Revelation. It seems to me that when I have grasped a scientific truth or discovered a sequence of historical events, reverence for the truth revealed always fills my very being. God is to be seen, especially when we are trying to solve a difficult problem and when the goal seems near.

LUIGI EINAUDI, Senator of the Kingdom, Turin, Italy.

CANTO V.

FREE-WILL.

"Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza
fesse creando ed a la sua bontate
più conformato e quel ch' e' più apprezza,
fu de la volontà la libertate;
di che le creature intelligenti
e tutte e sole, fuoro e son dotate." 19-24.

"The greatest gift that God out of His bounty has given in creating, the most conform to His Goodness, and most prized by Him, has been the freedom of the will, with which all and only intelligent creatures were and are endowed."

COMMENT.

1—I select these six verses of this canto because the passage expresses so well and so unmistakably the supreme dignity of man.

ABRAM R. BRUBACHER, Ph.D., Albany, N. Y., President of New York State College, Author of The Spirit of America.

2—With the foregoing passage I place the following quotation from the *Latin epistle to Can Grande della Scala.* XIII, 8, 15. "The subject of the whole work, therefore, taken in the letter only, is 'simply the state of souls after death.' For the course of the whole work turns on and about that. But if the work is taken allegorically, the subject is 'man, as by his merit or demerit in the exercise of his free-will, he is subjected to a rewarding or punishing Justice.' . . . The end of the whole and of the part may be manifold, that is, immediate and remote. But omitting subtle investigation, it may be said briefly, that the end of the whole, and of the part, is 'to remove those living in this life from a state of misery, and to lead them into a state of happiness.' "

When I think of Dante and the "Divine Commedia" I think more of the subjects of the Poem in which many favourite quotations are embedded. What more beautiful, for instance, than Piccarda's discourse on Divine Charity, (Par. III 64) with its heavenly line: "En la sua volontade è nostra pace"?

But looking abroad upon the world of the present from the vantage ground of a long life, one Divine truth taught by Dante from first to last is borne in upon me as of supreme importance, Free-will, as the greatest gift of God, and its application to human life. My quotation takes the form of a double one. The Italian affirms the Divine gift, and the Latin, the use or abuse of the gift with their results. Dante calls this result "lo contrapasso—the counterstroke." (Inf. XXVIII, 142). It is a mistake, however, to take this only as applying to sin, for, in his epistle, he places rewarding Justice first,

and the end of the Poem, as given there, could not be accomplished unless this were so. In Paradise the law of "contrapasso" becomes the law of merit, "of Grace and goodwill begotten" (Par. XXVIII, 112) which appoints to every one his or her place in the heavenly order, according to the quality of the life, and the use that has been made of it. Making due allowance for the intensity of Dante's poetic imagination and exaggeration, he preaches this truth from beginning to end of the Divine Comedy—that every free act of the human will returns upon the doer in blessing or the reverse, now or hereafter, and whatever may be the charm of thought or expression in the Poem, its practical end should never be lost sight of—the union of the will of God and the desire and will of man, in one moving circle turned by

"The Love that moves the Sun and the other stars."

THOMAS WATSON DUNCAN, Glasgow, Scotland, Author of The Beauties of the Divine Comedy (Italian and English).

MAN'S GUIDE UNTO SALVATION.

Siate, Cristiani, a muovervi più gravi:
non siate come penna ad ogni vento,
e non crediate ch' ogni acqua vi lavi.
Avete il novo e 'l vecchio Testamento,
e 'l pastor de la Chiesa che vi guida:
questo vi basti a vostro salvamento. 72-79.

Christians, be more grave in your motions; be not like a feather to every wind, and think not that every water will cleanse you. Ye have the Old and the New Testament, and the Pastor of the Church who guides you; let this suffice you for your salvation.

COMMENT.

In my youth Dante was to me teacher more than poet; it was in this rôle that he addressed me when the foregoing words came to me, to be remembered forever, a complete summing up, as I see it now, of Christian Doctrine.

CHARLES PHILLIPS, M.A., Notre Dame, Ind., Professor of English, University of Notre Dame, Ind. Author of New Poland.

CANTO VI.

JUSTINIAN RELATES THE STORY OF THE ROMAN EAGLE.

"Tu sai ch' el fece in Alba sua dimora
per trecento anni e oltre, infino al fine
che i tre e tre pugnar per lui ancora.
E sai ch' el fè dal mal de le Sabine
al dolor di Lucrezia in sette regi,
vincendo intorno le genti vicine.
Sai quel che fè, portato da li egregi
Romani incontro a Brenno, incontro a Pirro,
incontro a gli altri principi e collegi;
onde Troquato e Quinzio che dal cirro
negletto fu nomato, i Deci e' Fabi
ebber la fama che volontier mirro.
Esso atterrò l' orgoglio de li Arabi
che di retro ad Annibale passaro
l' alpestre rocce, Po, di che tu labi.
Sott' esso giovanetti triunfaro
Scipione e Pompeo; ed a quel colle
sotto 'l qual tu nascesti parve amaro.
Poi, presso al tempo che tutto 'l ciel volle
redur lo mondo a suo modo sereno,
Cesare per voler di Roma il tolle.
E quel che fè da Varo infino al Reno,
Isara vide ed Era e vide Senna
e ogne valle onde 'l Rodano è pieno.
Quel che fè poi ch' elli uscì di Ravenna
e saltò Rubicon, fu di tal volo,
che nol seguiteria lingua nè penna.
Inver la Spagna rivolse lo stuolo,
poi ver Durazzo, e Farsalia percosse
sì ch' al Nil caldo si sentì del duolo.
Antandro e Simoenta, onde si mosse,
rivide e là dov' Ettore si cuba;
e mal per Tolomeo poscia si scosse.
Da onde scese folgorando a Iuba;
onde si volse nel vostro occidente,
ove sentia la pompeiana tuba.
Di quel che fè col baiulo seguente,
Bruto con Cassio ne l' inferno latra,
e Modena e Perugia fu dolente.

Piangene ancor la trista Cleopatra,
che, fuggendoli innanzi, dal colubro
la morte prese subitana e atra.
Con costui corse infino al lito rubro;
con costui puose il mondo in tanta pace,
che fu serrato a Iano il suo delubro.
Ma ciò che 'l segno che parlar mi face
fatto avea prima e poi era fatturo
per lo regno mortal ch' a lui soggiace,
diventa in apparenza poco e scuro,
se in mano al terzo Cesare si mira
con occhio chiaro e con affetto puro;
chè la viva giustizia che mi spira,
li concedette, in mano a quel ch' i' dico,
gloria di far vendetta a la sua ira.
Or qui t' ammira in ciò ch' io ti replico:
poscia con Tito a far vendetta corse
de la vendetta del peccato antico.
E quando il dente longobardo morse
la Santa Chiesa, sotto le sue ali
Carlo Magno, vincendo, la soccorse." 37-96.

"Thou knowest that it made its abode in Alba for three hundred years and more, till at the end, the three fought against the three for its sake still. And thou knowest what it achieved from the Sabine women's wrong, down to the woe of Lucretia, in seven kings, conquering the neighbouring peoples round about. Thou knowest what it did, when borne by the illustrious Romans against Brennus, against Pyrrhus, and against the other chiefs and federated States: whereby Torquatus, and Quinctius who was named from his neglected locks, and the Decii and the Fabii acquired the fame which gladly I do embalm. It struck to earth the pride of the Arabs who, in the train of Hannibal, passed over the Alpine rocks from which thou, Po, glidest. Under it, in their youth, Scipio and Pompey triumphed, and cruel did it show itself to that hill beneath which thou wast born. Then, near the time when all Heaven willed to bring the world to its own serene mood, Caesar, by the will of Rome, assumed it; and what it did from the Var as far as the Rhine, the Isère beheld and the Saône, and the Seine also saw, and every valley whence the Rhone is filled. What it achieved when it came forth from Ravenna, and leaped the Rubicon, was of such flight that neither tongue nor pen could follow it."

"Toward Spain it wheeled its troop; then towards Durazzo, and smote Pharsalia so that to the torrid Nile the disaster was felt. It saw

again Antandros and Simois, whence it had taken its departure, and the spot where Hector lies; and then to the misfortune of Ptolemy it marched on again. Then it swooped flashing down on Juba; then it turned back unto your west, where it heard the Pompeian trumpet. Of what it achieved with its next standard-bearer, Brutus and Cassius are howling in Hell, and it made Moderna and Perugia doleful. Because of it the wretched Cleopatra is still weeping, who, fleeing before it, took from the asp sudden and black death."

"With him (Augustus) it ran far as the Red Sea shore; with him it composed the world in peace so great, that Janus saw his temple closed. But what the standard which causes me to speak, had done before, and afterwards was yet to do, throughout the mortal realm that is subject to it, becomes dwindled and obscured in appearance if, in the hand of the third Caesar, it be looked at with clear eye and with pure affection. For the living Justice which inspires me, vouchsafed unto it, in the hand of him of whom I speak, the glory of wreaking the vengeance of its wrath. Now marvel here at what I repeat to thee: with Titus afterwards it ran to do vengeance for the avenging of original sin. And when the Lombard tooth attacked the Holy Church, under its wings Charlemagne, conquering, succoured her."

THE EPISODE OF THE LOWLY ROMEO.

"E dentro a la presente margarita
luce la luce di Romeo, di cui
fu l' ovra grande e bella mal gradita.
Ma i Provenzai che fecer contra lui
non hanno riso; e però mal cammina
qual si fa danno del ben fare altrui.
Quattro figlie ebbe, e ciascuna reina,
Ramondo Beringhieri, e ciò le fece
Romeo, persona umile e peregrina.
E poi il mosser le parole biece
a dimandar ragione a questo giusto,
che li assegnò sette e cinque per diece.
Indi partissi povero e vetusto:
e se 'l mondo sapesse il cor ch' elli ebbe
mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto,
assai lo loda, e più lo loderebbe." 127-142.

"And within the present pearl (Mercury) shines the light of Romeo, whose great and beautiful work was ill-requited. But the Provençals who wrought against him, are not smiling; for an evil path that man treads who makes harm for himself of another's good deed. Four daughters,

and each a queen, had Raymond Berenger, and this was the work of Romeo, a humble person and a pilgrim. And then malignant words moved Raymond to demand a reckoning of this just man, who had rendered to him seven and five for every ten. Then he departed, poor and old, and if the world knew the heart he had, as he begged his livelihood, crust by crust, much as it does praise him, it would praise him still more."

COMMENT.

Dearly do I love this whole canto wherein is told the glowing story of the Roman Eagle which "beneath the shadow of his sacred wings governed the world." No writer has celebrated with more marvelous precision and terseness the victorious career of the Roman Eagle, that sacrosanct standard; the power of which began to show itself "from the hour Pallas died to give it a kingdom."

Instantaneously the flight of the Roman Eagle of itself covers Europe, so that it is finally seen exalted above all earthly greatness, and with outstretched wings governing from on high the human race.

But if our souls, as true heirs of Rome, live and palpitate in this apotheosis of the Eagle, in this same canto is related an episode which thrills our inmost being. I refer to the incident which signalizes the glory of Romeo, "a humble person and a pilgrim." Of the Holy Roman Empire Dante dreamed. He awaited its resurrection. He loved it passionately. In his judgment, civil society had never seen or could see anything more exalted. And yet Romeo is here raised to an eminence equally sublime and is depicted as comparable to Rome, even in name. He was a just man, and Dante asks no more. Romeo was also a poor man, a man persecuted by the envy of his neighbours. At once Dante sees in the pilgrim a kindred spirit and his whole soul goes out to this noble victim of persecution. The reader upon seeing Romeo, poor and old, departing with his mule and pilgrim's staff and scrip, from the court of the Count of Provence, will find it impossible not to think of Dante, exiled from Florence for his passionate love of justice, and knowing, as only an exile can know, "how bitter is the bread of dependence and how steep the stranger's stairs." If, then, this canto with its glorification of the Eagle exalts the pride of our race, with the moving tale of Romeo it equally

appeals to all hearts and fills them with a most tender sympathy.

PRINCE LUDOVICO SPADA POTENZIANI, Governor of Rome, Italy.

GOOD AND BAD FATHERS.

Molte fiate già pianser li figli
per la colpa del padre. 109.

"Many a time, ere now, have children wailed for father's fault."

COMMENT.

Catholic in his application of moral principles or practices which fit human experience of every kind, Dante does not overlook the evils which children often suffer from the transgressions of their fathers. Many present-day moralists blame youth alone for the derelictions which cause so much grief to homes. Other writers, holding a theory of behaviourism which is based upon determinism, see guilt in none. But Dante proclaims a fact in agreement with common human experience—

"Many a time, ere now, have children wailed for father's fault."

If the scene, called up by these words, exhibited youth in an attitude of indifference, resentment, defiance, or hatred against their fathers, the cause of their misfortune, because of failure of parental responsibility, the lesson would be lost. But what parent can remain unmoved when he sees innocent children in tears because of his own frailty or of his own perversity in ignoring moral restraints? Here, then, Dante speaks across the chasm of six hundred years, to recall all derelict parents to a high sense of duty, to cause them to make reparation for the past and to enter upon a course of rectitude for the future. For our further instruction he gives, in a few words, a deathless picture of the good father who always commands the respect and the love of his children:

Diffuso era per li occhi e per le gene
di benigna letizia, in atto pio,
quale a tenero padre si convene. Par. XXXI, 61-63.

(His eyes and cheeks were overpoured with benign gladness, in kindly gesture as befits a tender father.)

AUSTIN DOWLING, D.D., Archbishop of St. Paul, Minn.

CANTO VIII.

HOW FROM SWEET SEED CAN ISSUE FORTH BITTER FRUIT?

Lo ben che tutto il regno che tu scandi
volge e contenta, fa esser virtute
sua provedenza in questi corpi grandi,
E non pur le nature provedute
sono in la mente ch' è da sè perfetta,
ma esse insieme con la lor salute:
per che quantunque quest' arco saetta,
disposto cade a proveduto fine,
sì come cosa in suo segno diretta.
Se ciò non fosse, il ciel che tu cammine
producerebbe sì li suoi effetti,
che non sarebbero arti, ma ruine. 97-108.

The Good who revolves and contents the whole realm which thou art ascending, makes His providence to be a power in these great bodies. And provision is made not only for the diverse natures foreseen in the Mind which is perfect in itself, but for them in relation to their attaining their final end. Wherefore whatsoever this bow shoots off falls disposed to its foreseen end, like a thing directed to its mark.

COMMENT.

This passage appeals to me, as the solution of a central problem in philosophy. It contains a whole system of teleology and fixes in condensed form the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas regarding the order of nature. The same idea is expressed in the *Inferno*. XI, 97-100.

EDWARD A. PACE, Ph.D., S.T.D., Vice-Rector of The Catholic University, Washington, D. C. Editor of the Catholic Encyclopedia.

CANTO IX.

TIME WILL AVENGE WRONGS.

Charles Martel to Dante:

"Taci, e lascia volger li anni";
sì ch' io non posso dir se non che pianto
giusto verrà di retro ai vostri danni. 4-7.

"Keep silence and let the years revolve," so that this only can I say that your well-deserved lamentation shall follow on your wrongs.

COMMENT.

This was my favourite quotation, during the World War. Since then it is

> Ciò che vedesti fu perchè non scuse
> d' aprir lo core a l' acque de la pace
> che da l' etterno fonte son diffuse. Purg. XV. 130-132.

"That which thou sawest was (shown to thee) in order that thou shouldst have no excuse from opening thy heart to the waters of peace, which flow from the eternal fountain."

A. Van de Vyvere, Minister of State, Brussels, Belgium. Author of L'Esilio di Dante.

CANTO X.

CREATION AN ACT OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

> Guardando nel suo Figlio con l' Amore
> che l' uno e l' altro etternalmente spira,
> lo primo ed ineffabile Valore,
> quanto per mente e per loco si gira,
> con tant' ordine fè, ch' esser non puote
> sanza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira. 1-6.

The Primal and Ineffable Power, contemplating His Son with the Love that both eternally breathe forth, created with so much order all that revolves through the mind or through space, that he who views it cannot but have a foretaste of Him.

COMMENT.

This passage is completed by coördinating with it verses fifty-two to fifty-five of Par. XIII, viz.:

> Ciò che non more e ciò che può morire
> non è se non splendor di quella idea
> che partorisce, amando, il nostro sire.

(That which cannot die and that which can die are naught else but the splendour of that Idea (of Creation) to which, in His love, our Sovereign Lord gives birth.)

These texts set forth with sublime brevity the doctrine of the Angel of the Schools on the Blessed Trinity; on the kind of relations which constitute the Divine Persons in the union

of their ineffable and infinitely rich nature; on Creation of which the Father with the Son and the Love who proceeds from the two, is the author and upon which He imposes an order which the spectator of the Divine Works cannot fail to perceive and experience. Thus all things are the reflection of the Eternal Idea brought forth in Love; all are luminous and inspiring of Divine Love.

In a few lines the theologian-poet describes the Divine Processions and the Triple Cause, efficient, final and exemplary, of the world. It is impossible to put more theology in fewer words.

Jean Arthur Chollet, D.D., Archbishop of Cambrai, France.

THANKSGIVING. THE TWELVE GREATEST THEOLOGIANS. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF DESCRIBING THE SWEETNESS OF THEIR SONG AND THE GLORY OF THEIR LIGHT.

Cor di mortal non fu mai sì digesto
a divozione ed a rendersi a Dio
con tutto il suo gradir cotanto presto,
come a quelle parole mi fec' io;
e sì tutto il mio amore in lui si mise,
che Beatrice eclissò ne l' oblio.
Non le dispiacque; ma sì se ne rise,
che lo splendor de li occhi suoi ridenti
mia mente unita in più cose divise.
Io vidi più fulgor vivi e vincenti
far di noi centro e di sè far corona,
più dolci in voce che in vista lucenti;
così cinger la figlia di Latona
vedem talvolta, quando l' aere è pregno,
sì che ritenga il fil che fa la zona.
Ne la corte del cielo, ond' io rivegno,
si trovan molte gioie care e belle
tanto che non si posson trar del regno;
e 'l canto di quei lumi era di quelle;
chi non s' impenna sì che là su voli,
dal muto aspetti quindi le novelle.
Poi, sì cantando, quelli ardenti soli
si fuor girati intorno a noi tre volte,
come stelle vicine a' fermi poli,

donne mi parver non da ballo sciolte,
ma che s' arrestin tacite, ascoltando
fin che le nove note hanno ricolte. 55-81.

Never was heart of mortal so disposed to devotion and to render itself up to God with all its will, as I became at those words; and all my love was so set on Him that Beatrice was eclipsed in oblivion. It displeased her not; but she so smiled thereat that the splendour of her laughing eyes diverted my absorbed mind to many objects. I saw many living and surpassing effulgences make of us a center, and of themselves a crown, more sweet in voice even than shining in appearance. Thus at times do we see the daughter of Latona (i.e. the Moon) girded about when the air is so pregnant as to retain the thread which weaves the halo. In the court of Heaven whence I return, are found many jewels so precious and beautiful that they cannot be transferred from the Kingdom, and of such was the singing of these lights; he who does not so wing himself that he may fly up there, must await the tidings thence from a dumb man. After those blazing suns, thus singing, had circled around us three times, like stars near to the fixed poles, they seemed to me as ladies not released from the dance, but who pause for a moment in silence, listening until they have caught the new notes.

COMMENT.

Where in all poetry can lovelier imagery be found than in the lines 55-90 of this canto? If pressed to select a single favourite passage, I do not know that I could hit upon one more satisfying than lines 70-76. "Ne la corte del cielo," etc.

MELVILLE BEST ANDERSON, LL.D., Litt.D., Menlo Park, Calif. Professor Emeritus of Stanford University and author of a line for line version in English *terza rima* of the Divina Commedia.

THESE SPIRITS SURROUND DANTE AND BEATRICE, AS A CROWN, AND CHANT IN WONDROUS SONG.

Io vidi più fulgor vivi e vincenti
far di noi centro e di sè far corona,
più dolci in voce che in vista lucenti. 64-66.

I saw many living and surpassing effulgences make of us a center, and of themselves a crown, more sweet in voice even than shining in appearance.

COMMENT.

This expresses, with the final Dantean simplicity, a most characteristic aspect of his vision of Heaven, the rapture of immediate expression and response. Dante's images are never decorative. They are implicit in the texture of his onward thought, illuminative, leading.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN, Ph.D., Professor of English composition, Barnard College, Columbia University, New York. Author of Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic.

ST. THOMAS DECLARES THAT THE ELECT FREELY LOVE TO DO DANTE PLEASURE.

"Quando
lo raggio de la grazia, onde s' accende
verace amore e che poi cresce amando,
multiplicato in te tanto resplende,
che ti conduce su per quella scala
u' sanza risalir nessun discende;
qual ti negasse il vin de la sua fiala
per la tua sete, in libertà non fora
se non com' acqua ch' al mar non si cala." 83-90.

"Since the ray of grace, whereby true love is kindled and which thereafter grows multiplied in loving, shines in thee so wondrously that it is conducting thee upward by that stair which none descends without again reascending, he who would deny to thee the wine of his flask for thy thirst, would not be more at liberty than water that descends not to the sea."

COMMENT.

I like best this beginning of the speech of St. Thomas to Dante, because I think the greatest of all poets in this passage poetically acknowledges his obligation to the greatest of philosophers, for his learning in philosophy and theology.

DANIEL J. DONAHUE, Attorney at Law, Middletown, Conn. Author of Songs for Christmas.

CANTO XI.

THE CARES OF THIS WORLD TAKE MAN'S THOUGHTS AND ASPIRATIONS FROM HEAVEN.

O insensata cura de' mortali,
quanto son difettivi sillogismi
quei che ti fanno in basso batter l' ali!
Chi dietro a iura, e chi ad aforismi
sen giva, e chi seguendo sacerdozio,
e chi regnar per forza o per sofismi,
e chi rubare, e chi civil negozio;
chi nel diletto de la carne involto
s' affaticava, e chi si dava a l' ozio,
quando, da tutte queste cose sciolto,
con Beatrice m' era suso in cielo
cotanto gloriosamente accolto. 1-12.

O insensate care of mortals! how defective are those syllogisms which make thee beat thy wings in downward flight! One was going after the Laws, and another after the Aphorisms (of Hippocrates); one was studying for the priesthood, and another was striving to rule by force or sophistry; one was toiling for graft, and another at civil business; one was exhausting himself, involved in pleasures of the flesh, and another was giving himself up to idleness: while I, freed from all these things, with Beatrice was being so gloriously received on high in Heaven.

COMMENT.

1—This is my favourite passage, because in forceful terms it points out the folly of mortals who devote all their power and energy to the achievement of earthly success, and neglect the true aim of life, namely the attainment of spiritual happiness.

ALFONSO DE SILVIO, Ph.D., Evanston, Ill., Professor of Romance Languages, Northwestern University. Edited Foggazzaro's Pereat Rochus.

2—Of all the passages of the Divine Comedy, the eternal poem of humanity, so rich with incomparable esthetic joys and doctrine for all, I prefer these verses in which the poet flagellates the mad concern of mortals for the things of earth.

L. GIUFFRÉ, College Professor, Palermo, Italy. Author of La Medicina di Dante.

3—These verses have always profoundly impressed me, as expressive of Dante's high conception of all human life and of the sublime judgment he passes upon it. Here is the life of the worker and the idler; of the scholar and the contemner of learning: of the master and the servant; of the joyous and the sad. Legislators, physicians, priests, tyrants, diplomats, executives, gentlemen, rogues—all equally are victims of a mad effort in a passing dream. Blessed is he who has a Beatrice. With her as guide and inspirer, he will have the assurance of rising from this dream to a virtuous life, the life which, Christians declare, is the only life worth the living.

GUIDO MAZZONI, Professor in the University of Florence, Italy. Senator of the Kingdom. Author of Abati, Soldati, Attori, Autori del Settocento.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI ROSE SUNLIKE.

Di questa costa, là dov' ella frange
più sua rattezza, nacque al mondo un sole,
come fa questo tal volta di Gange. 49-51.

From this slope at the point where it most breaks its steepness (i.e. at Assisi) rose a Sun (St. Francis) upon the world, as this one (the real sun) sometimes does from the Ganges.

COMMENT.

1—If it is permitted to extract a nugget from Dante's massive "reef-gold" then I choose this simile: for in the Poverello, as I have stated in my book, *Il Sole del Gange,* Dante in only eleven words gives us the sublime vision of the most radiant saint of Christianity, St. Francis of Assisi, burning and fulgent as the sunrise on the Ganges.

GIUSEPPE DE LORENZO, Senator of the Kingdom, Professor of Geology in the Royal University of Naples, Italy.

2—My favourite passage is this life of St. Francis of Assisi, as told the poet by St. Thomas Aquinas. Especially do the initial lines here quoted express, in terms of light, the influence of the Poverello on the world. Then will follow the incomparable story of that life, with a perfect description of the sacred mountain of La Verna.

CHESTER ALDRICH, architect, New York City.

FRANCIS TAKES LADY POVERTY AS HIS BRIDE, FOUNDS AN ORDER, AND RECEIVES THE STIGMATA.

"Non era ancor molto lontan da l' orto,
ch' el cominciò a far sentir la terra
de la sua gran virtute alcun conforto;
chè per tal donna, giovinetto, in guerra
del padre corse, a cui, come a la morte,
la porta del piacer nessun diserra;
e dinanzi a la sua spirital corte
et coram patre le si fece unito;
poscia di dì in dì l' amò più forte.
questa, privata del primo marito,
millecent' anni e più dispetta e scura
fino a costui si stette sanza invito;
nè valse udir che la trovò sicura
con Amiclate, al suon de la sua voce,
colui ch' a tutto 'l mondo fè paura;
nè valse esser costante nè feroce,
sì che, dove Maria rimase giuso,
ella con Cristo pianse in su la croce.
Ma perch' io non proceda troppo chiuso,
Francesco e Povertà per questi amanti
prendi oramai nel mio parlar diffuso.
La lor concordia e i lor lieti sembianti,
amore e maraviglia e dolce sguardo
facieno esser cagion di pensier santi;
tanto che 'l venerabile Bernardo
si scalzò prima, e dietro a tanta pace
corse e, correndo, li parve esser tardo.
Oh ignota ricchezza, oh ben ferace!
Scalzasi Egidio, scalzasi Silvestro,
dietro a lo sposo, sì la sposa piace.
Indi sen va quel padre e quel maestro
con la sua donna e con quella famiglia
che già legava l' umile capestro.
Nè li gravò viltà di cor le ciglia
per esser fi' di Pietro Bernardone,
nè per parer dispetto a maraviglia;
ma regalmente sua dura intenzione
ad Innocenzio aperse, e da lui ebbe
primo sigillo a sua religione.

Poi che la gente poverella crebbe
dietro a costui, la cui mirabil vita
meglio in gloria del ciel si canterebbe,
di seconda corona redimita
fu per Onorio da l' etterno Spiro
la santa voglia d' esto archimandrita.
E poi che, per la sete del martiro,
ne la presenza del Soldan superba
predicò Cristo e gli altri che 'l seguiro,
e per trovare a conversione acerba
troppo la gente, per non stare indarno,
reddissi al frutto de l' italica erba,
nel crudo sasso intra Tevero e Arno
da Cristo prese l' ultimo sigillo,
che le sue membra due anni portarno.
Quando a colui ch' a tanto ben sortillo
piacque di trarlo suso a la mercede
ch' el meritò nel suo farsi pusillo,
a' frati suoi, sì com' a giuste rede,
raccomandò la donna sua più cara,
e comandò che l' amassero a fede;
e del suo grembo l' anima preclara
mover si volse, tornando al suo regno,
e al suo corpo non volse altra bara." 55-117.

"He was not yet far from his rising when he began to make the earth feel some comfort from his great virtue; for while still a youth he incurred the wrath of his father for a certain Lady (Poverty), to whom, even as to death, no one unlocks the gate of pleasure: and in the spiritual court that had rule over him, and in his father's presence, he united himself to her, after which, from day to day he loved her more ardently. She, widowed of her first husband, (Christ), for eleven hundred years and more, despised and obscure, had remained unwooed till he (St. Francis) came, nor aught did it avail her to hear that he (Cæsar) who caused fear to all the world, found her at the sound of his voice unmoved with Amyclas: nor aught did it avail her to have been so constant and undaunted, so that when Mary remained below, she wept with Christ upon the cross. But that I may not proceed too obscurely, henceforth take, in my diffuse narrative, Francis and Poverty for these lovers.

Their concord and their gladsome countenances made love, and wonder, and sweet regard to be the cause of holy thoughts (in others); so much so that the venerable Bernard first bared his feet, and ran following such great peace, and, as he ran, it seemed to him that he was slow of

foot. Oh unknown riches, oh fertile good! Egidius bares his feet, as does Sylvester, following the bridegroom, so pleasing is the bride (Poverty)."

"Thenceforth that Father and that Master (St. Francis) goes on his way with his Lady, and with that family whom the humble cincture already bound; nor did any cowardice of heart weigh down his brow, from being the son of Pietro Bernardone, nor from seeming marvelously despised. But, like a king, he unfolded his stern resolve to Innocent, and received from him the first seal of his Order. After the poor friars increased, following in the steps of him whose marvelous life were better sung in the glory of the Heavens, the holy purpose of this Archimandrite was by the Eternal Spirit, through Honorius, adorned with a second crown. And when, through thirst for martyrdom he had preached Christ and His disciples, in the proud presence of the Sultan, and because he found the people too stubborn for conversion, and in order not to remain there in vain, he returned to the harvest of the Italian crop, and on the rude rock, between the Tiber and the Arno, received from Christ that final imprint (i.e. the stigmata) his members carried for two years."

"When it pleased Him who chose him for so much good, to draw him on high to the reward which he had gained by making himself abject, he commended his most dear Lady (Poverty) to his brethren, as to rightful heirs, and commanded them to love her faithfully; and from her bosom his illustrious soul willed to depart, returning to its realm, and for his body he would have no other bier."

COMMENT.

1—Dante has taken the grim, repulsive form of poverty and transformed it into a bride. In this way he has given beauty and romance to features which have always been considered in this world as ugly and commonplace.

Joseph H. Odell, D.D., LL.D., Wilmington, Del. Author of Unmailed Letters.

2—In this passage the Poet seems to have revealed the ideal of his heart. This ideal he has incarnated in St. Francis of Assisi, or rather the Poverello, in Dante's judgment, seems to have brought to our world the perfect realization of his ideal. "Whosoever will speak of that place (Assisi) let him not say "Ascesi" (an old form for Assisi), which would say too little, but Orient if he would speak properly" (52-54). To Dante, St. Francis is the Sun of a new world in which love will reign.

With all the strength of his soul, weighed down so often by so many fratricidal struggles, the Poet was, indeed, crying out for this reign of peace and charity which Christ had preached and promised to the world. St. Francis, with his three Orders founded on love of Poverty, embraced for Christ's sweet sake, seemed to Dante to be the real pacifier of souls and of nations. He sings the praises of Francis, and in the third Order becomes his son. In the convent of the brethren he finds hospitality. His testimony remains an invitation to others there to seek happiness.

Hilaire de Barenton, Capuchin Friar, Paris, France, Founder and director of L'Action franciscaine.

THE STIGMATA OF FRANCIS.

Nel crudo sasso intra Tevero e Arno
da Cristo prese l' ultimo sigillo,
che le sue membra due anni portarno. 106-108.

"On the rude rock, between the Tiber and the Arno, he received from Christ that final imprint his members carried for two years."

COMMENT.

These three lines, summarizing with marvelous terseness the history of the giving of the stigmata, were probably intended by Dante merely as a suggestion and reminder of the miracle known at that time to all men who could read the Divine Poem. But I love to think how often, in the later ages of modern paganism they have been the first introduction to that great mystery to men of culture who were woefully and, sometimes, wilfully ignorant, of the supernatural aspect of the life of the little Poor Man.

Josephine Ward, London, England.

CANTO XII.

ST. BONAVENTURE, MOVED BY HEAVENLY LOVE, BEGINS AN ENCOMIUM OF ST. DOMINIC.

L'amor che mi fa bella 31.

The love which makes me beautiful.

COMMENT.

Omitting some of the most obviously sublime passages, I find myself returning again and again to that exquisite line from St. Bonaventura's speech

L'amor che mi fa bella.

The fact of human love making human faces suddenly radiant or youthful is so familiar to us all that it seems to me, Dante is stressing a particularly profound and delicate truth—perhaps even suggesting an explanation of the "glorified body" to follow the Resurrection—when he lifts this phenomenon up into the spiritual order, and allows his great saint to speak so simply of *the love which makes me beautiful.*

KATHERINE BRÉGY, Philadelphia, Pa. Author of Dante and His Vision of Life.

CANTO XIII.

ADAM AND CHRIST.

"Tu credi che nel petto onde la costa
si trasse per formar la bella guancia
il cui palato a tutto 'l mondo costa,
ed in quel che, forato da la lancia,
e poscia e prima tanto sodisfece,
che d' ogni colpa vince la bilancia,
quantunque a la natura umana lece
aver di lume, tutto fosse infuso
da quel valor che l' uno e l' altro fece." 37-46.

"Thou believest that in the breast from which was taken out the rib to form the lovely face whose taste cost dear to all the world, and in that which, pierced by the lance, both after and before made satisfaction so great that it outweighs the balance of every sin (thou believest I repeat) that whatever light human nature may receive, was all infused (into Adam and into Christ) by that Power who made the one and the other."

COMMENT.

The Christian Poet of the Middle Ages here draws a parallel between the breast of Adam from which a rib was taken to form woman, and the side of Christ, pierced by a

lance, from which issued forth the Redemption, to mark the greatness of humanity, for "human nature never yet was, nor can be (as perfect) as it was in those two persons." (86-87)

But to place in the same show-case in a museum, in order to demonstrate the simian development of human beings, the skeleton of a monkey and that of a man, is an absurdity of modern unbelief, which would have called forth the satiric inspiration of Dante. What a depreciation of conceptions! And for Adam, in addition to the affront, what a chastisement! The first man turned his back upon God, "his Father," in the literal sense of the words. Then Heaven permitted the scattered peoples born of this man to deny him, in his turn, and to invent for themselves an ancestor really ignoble. The lines of Dante make a happy contrast with this debasing idea. He preaches a total rehabilitation of mankind. For Christ was of Adam and "Adam was of God" (Luke III, 38). So we all are "of Adam and of Christ" by these two admirable creatures, Eve who came forth from the side of the first man, and Holy Church that was the issue of the Second Adam.

EMILE HOFFET, Lay brother of Mary Immaculate, Paris, France, Author of Papal Theology.

THE CREATION OF BEINGS IMMORTAL AND OF ENTITIES TEMPORAL.

Ciò che non more e ciò che può morire
non è se non splendor di quella idea
che partorisce, amando, il nostro sire. 52-55.

"That which cannot die and that which can die are naught else but the splendour of that Idea (of Creation) to which, in His love, our Sovereign Lord gives birth."

COMMENT.

1—In these three verses, in my opinion, lies all of the theological doctrine dating back to the beginning of creation and embracing the immortality of the angels, the Heavens, the first matter and the human soul.

All these, having sprung into spontaneous being by God's command, God being eternal, cannot die.

This passage forms the axle of all life's philosophy, the spur that has goaded mankind for centuries and centuries

toward the solution of the enigma of life. It was the foundation for the theories of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the pivot of all life, moral, social, and religious, the ultimate aspiration of the human being, the reason for our existence.

G. M. Pellettieri, M.D., St. Louis, Mo. Author of Love Enchained and Other Plays.

2—I love this living thought of Platonic beauty, set, like a gem, in the ring of this golden *terzina*.

Love and light are to Dante, the eternal symbols of the Infinite.

His Paradise is the highest spiritual manifestation of God. There affections are reduced to love, sentiments to beatitude, acts to contemplation; all these things take on the immaterial aspect of light. As the sun sheds its light on the different objects of the earth, and as each one receives this emanation differently according to its proper nature, so all creatures bask in the Divine Splendour in proportion to their nearness to the first source, God, who, through love, brought them forth. Now this condition is enjoyed by the angels in a supreme degree and, in diminishing proportions, by men, animals, plants and inorganic beings.

The intensity of light gradually increases in Dante's Paradise so that if, at first, it barely illumines with a soft lustre the countenances of the souls, it increases, little by little, until it envelopes, as in a veil of flame, the aereal forms: so we see starry nimbuses, faint rainbows, glittering rays, sudden flashes, dazzling reflections, pure transparencies, changes of color, all emanating from God, the source of eternal light.

In the Empyrean the river of light, "the wondrous torrent between two banks decked with the marvelous flowers of spring," glitters with angelic sparks which set themselves within the flowers as if to be inebriated with the perfume. This Empyrean, ardent and vivified with holy love, itself the very breath of God, is the principle of divine power which multiplies and is transfused into all the subordinate Heavens.

The marvelous Dantean conception of the highest human beatitude expresses its ideal in the three heavenly verses quoted above. I prefer them above all other passages of the sacred poem, and I like to quote them for the reason that every man

irresistibly tends to happiness, and Dante, in this *terzina*, points out the first origin of happiness in the creative love of God.

MARCHESE PIETRO MISCIATELLI, President of the Casa di Dante, Rome, Italy. Author of Pagine Dantesche.

ADMONITION OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS AGAINST FORMING OPINIONS AS TO THE SALVATION OR DAMNATION OF OTHERS.

'Ch' i' ho veduto tutto il verno prima
lo prun mostrarsi rigido e feroce,
poscia portar la rosa in su la cima." 133-135.

"For I have seen the thorn first show itself stiff and wild all through the winter, then bear the rose upon its summit."

COMMENT.

I am reminded of this truth whenever I hear criticism based on appearances or superficial seeming, and whenever I am myself tempted so to criticise. The passage seems to me to imply that we mortals have slight data for severe judgments: that it is better to heed the admonition: "Judge not, that you may not be judged." Matt. VII, 1.

CHARLES H. DOUGLAS, Litt.D., Boston, Mass. Author of History and Government.

CANTO XIV.

UPON THE GLEAMING CROSS OF MARS, CHRIST GLOWS IN SUCH FASHION AS TONGUE CANNOT DESCRIBE.

Qui vince la memoria mia lo'ngegno;
chè 'n quella croce lampeggiava Cristo
sì, ch' io non so trovare essemplo degno;
ma chi prende sua croce e segue Cristo,
ancor mi scuserà di quel ch' io lasso,
vedendo in quell' albor balenar Cristo. 103-108.

Here memory overpowers my faculties, for that Cross so flashed forth Christ that I can find no worthy simile. But he who takes up his cross

and follows Christ, will yet pardon me for what I leave unsaid, when in that brightness he sees Christ gleaming.

COMMENT.

1—Not only something of charm in the movement of the lines impressed me but, more—the forecast in few words of the light and glory of the eternal morning.

EVANGELINE M. O'CONNOR, New York City, Translator of Flamini's History of Italian Literature.

2—A most delicate and profound sentiment, inspired by faith and confirmed by art, prevents the Poet from using any word to rime with the name of Christ. There are three other instances in the Divine Comedy where we find this triplication of the name of Christ at the end of lines riming, viz., Par. XII, 71, 73, 75; XIX, 104, 106, 108, and XXXII, 83, 85, 87. How could Dante who looked upon the face of Christ, find in human speech any word worthy enough to rime with the sacred name of the Saviour? So in love and awe he simply repeats the holy name of Christ.

ORAZIO PANZA, Milan, Italy.

SOULS IN LIGHT APPEAR ON THE CROSS IN THE HEAVEN OF MARS, AND SING A SONG OF VICTORY.

Così da' lumi che lì m' apparinno
s' accogliea per la croce una melode
che mi rapiva, sanza intender l' inno.
Ben m' accors' io ch' elli era d' alte lode,
però ch' a me venia "Resurgi" e "Vinci." 121-125.

So from the lights that appeared to me in that place, was gathered upon the Cross such a melody that it rapt me without understanding of the hymn. Truly was I aware that it was of lofty praise, for there came to me (the words) "Arise and conquer!"

COMMENT.

1—This and the famous Ulysses passage at the end of Inferno XXVI are my favourite quotations from Dante, as

they give expression to the Poet's deep-rooted belief in the progress of the human race in the highest sense of the term.

L. COLLISON-MORLEY, London, England.

CANTO XV.

CACCIAGUIDA TELLS OF HIS BIRTH AND BAPTISM IN FLORENCE OF OLDEN TIME.

"A così riposato, a così bello
viver di cittadini, a così fida
cittadinanza, a così dolce ostello,
Maria mi diè, chiamata in alte grida;
e ne l' antico vostro Batisteo
insieme fui cristiano e Cacciaguida." 130-135.

"To such a tranquil and so fair a life among citizens, to such a loyal community, to such a sweet abode, Mary, with loud cries invoked (in my mother's pains of childbirth) gave me; and in your ancient Baptistery I became at once a Christian and Cacciaguida."

COMMENT.

We have here only a few words of the greatest simplicity, yet the choice and disposition of them are such that they perfectly correspond to the concept that Dante wishes to express, and to the picture he desires to make, of his Florence of olden time when, despite the restless and turbulent political conditions of his times, the city offered to its inhabitants all the joys that accrue from social intercourse. The fugitive Ghibelline, even when inveighing against the rulers of his city who had exiled him, makes his personal affairs second to the interests of his country. Implied in the beautiful verses quoted above, there is his two-fold feeling of nostalgia, namely, his desire to see again the city of his birth, and, what is more, to know that it is enjoying a happy peace. For this reason the passage quoted has left in my soul, as it has done in the souls of many others, a most vivid and profound impression.

GIACOMO BARBERA, Ph.D., Rome, Italy. Delegate to the International Radio Congress held at Washington, D. C., December, 1927.

CANTO XVI.

CACCIAGUIDA DEPLORES THE UNDUE GROWTH OF FLORENCE.

Sempre la confusion de le persone
principio fu del mal de la cittade,
come del vostro il cibo che s' appone. 66-69.

The confusing intermingling of persons has always been the beginning of a city's adversity, like excess food in the body.

COMMENT.

A lover of popular traditions I see in these verses a text of folk-lore applicable to a present-day problem. Farms are abandoned and people are massed in cities to the grave injury not only of agriculture but of simplicity of living. City housing, brought about with depopulation of the rural districts, is, indeed, an old problem, but one we still face today. For the Poet it is an evil, but where is the remedy?

RAFFAELE CORSO, Professor, Royal Oriental Institute, Naples, Italy. Editor of Il Forklore Italiano.

THE MOON.

Il volger del ciel de la luna
cuopre e discuopre i liti sanza posa. 82-83.

The rolling of the lunar Heaven doth hide and reveal the strand unceasingly.

COMMENT.

This is the line that remains most vividly with me; it is the line that *sings* most surely and lastingly in my memory. It does something inexplicable to me—exalts me; lifts me up to Dante's side, makes me climb the heights, join him in his exile, walk with him in the night, stand in silence with him on some peak of the Apennines, see and feel him, personally, a solitary figure, of the earth, and yet above it, contemplating it and understanding all that it means,—this little sphere of ours, wheeling in space, bathed in God's light, its tides moving in rhythmic order, as all things created, from the soul of man

to the heart of the lowliest creature, move and beat and pulsate in the eternal harmony of God. Surely Dante has done much for me in making me sensible, as no other poet has, of the infinite order of God's universe. Through no lines of the Comedy does this divine and universal pulsation come closer and more rhythmically to my heart and soul as through those three lines.

CHARLES PHILLIPS, M.A., Notre Dame, Ind. Professor of English University of Notre Dame. Author of The New Poland.

CANTO XVII.

DANTE UNDAUNTED BY IMPENDING EVILS.

Dette mi fuor di mia vita futura
parole gravi, avvegna ch' io mi senta
ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura. 22-24.

Grave words were said to me of my future life; albeit I feel me squarely set against the blows of fortune.

COMMENT.

Dante has been all my life more living as an influence in my best thought and my best feeling than any other writer whatsoever. I have found, over and over again, that at moments of crisis, in times of suffering, of danger and of difficult decisions, lines from the great poet would present themselves spontaneously to my mind. There are many lines that I might choose according to different moods. But the line I quote and which, I imagine, will not be hit upon by anyone else, has many times come to my memory. When one thinks of the difficult wandering life of Dante, it is amazing that so proud an assertion of enduring manhood could have been made by him in the Paradiso.

STEPHEN H. BUSH, Iowa City, Iowa. Head of Department of Romance Languages, University of Iowa. Author of The Dry Bones of Language Teaching.

SECONDARY CAUSES, THOUGH FORESEEN BY GOD, ARE NOT THEREFORE RENDERED NECESSARY.

"La contingenza, che fuor del quaderno
de la vostra matera non si stende,
tutta è dipinta nel cospetto etterno. 37-39.

Contingency, which extends not beyond the volume of the matter of your world, is all depicted in the Eternal Vision.

COMMENT.

From among a thousand other lines I select as my favourite the wonderful passage in which Dante, reasoning on future, free contingent beings and events, reveals himself both as the supreme poet and a most profound theologian.

Contingent beings (free, or necessary) which do not exist outside of our material world, are all depicted in the Eternal Vision. They are, therefore, present in the Divine Intellect because they are seen from Eternity which embraces all time ("the point whereto all things are present," line 18). He infallibly knows all such contingent beings, without any succession whatever in their becoming, as He sees them all in one glance as present. So St. Thomas teaches: *"Subduntur divino conspectui secundum suam praesentialitatem: et tamen sunt futura contingentia, suis causis proximis comparata."* (Sum. I q. XIV art. 13.) In God, all things are *present*. They are not past or future. The future is for us only. Hence Dante sagaciously makes you know that even before you think, you manifest to God your thought. "That Mirror (God) in which before thou canst think, is displayed thy thought." (Par. XV, 63), because, though the thought, before it is formed, is future to us, it is already *present* in the eternal mind of God. You must not therefore conclude: "If God knows from eternity whatever I shall think, therefore, my thought is no longer free." That would be a false conclusion, for Divine Prescience does not take from you freedom of thought, since It sees infallibly all things as *they are,* sees *necessary* events as *necessary, free* acts as *free;* because the Divine Vision discovers things as they are, and does not change their nature. Consequently, as he who sees from afar a ship sailing down the river, does not necessitate the course

of the vessel by the fact that he sees it, so God, seeing from eternity our future thoughts—and they all depend upon our free-will—does not necessitate them; since He sees them, not as *future,* but as *present,* already determined freely to their act according to their nature (Cf. S. Thomas. Sum. I. XIV, art. 13). And so Dante as a theologian, puts forth with admirable art his logical conclusion:

necessità però quindi non prende
se non come dal viso in che si specchia
nave che per corrente giù discende. 40-42.

(But necessity does not, on that account, arise from this, any more than from the sight in which is reflected a ship going down with the current.)
T. W. DUNCAN'S translation.

P. TITO BOTTAGISIO, S.J., Milan, Italy. Author of Bonifacio VIII e un celebre Commentatore di Dante.

CACCIAGUIDA FORETELLS DANTE'S EXILE AND PENURY.

"Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
più caramente; e questo è quello strale
che l' arco de lo essilio pria saetta.
Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
lo pane altrui, e come è duro calle
lo scendere e 'l salir per l' altrui scale." 55-60.

"Thou shalt leave behind everything beloved most dearly; and this is the arrow which the bow of exile first shoots. Thou shalt experience how salt with tears doth taste another's bread or to climb another's stairs how hard a path!"

COMMENT.

1—This passage portrays to me more vividly than any other the depths of constant melancholy into which Dante's heart was plunged. It gives us in exquisite verse the very music of his soul and a reflex of his daily life.

WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE, LL.D., Richmond, Ind. Author of Some Love Songs of Petrarch (translation and biography).

2—In the passage, 58-60, we have in three lines the bitterness of exile—the life, as it were, of the great Dante. The

picture is one which has haunted me since my college days at Harvard. It carries the reader by two concrete images into the very heart of the poet. I can liken it to one other passage only—the sad, true, and profound description of life given in a single line by Alfred de Musset:

"Souhaiter, regretter, prendre et tendre la main."

RAYMOND WEEKS, Ph.D., Professor of Romance Languages, Columbia University, New York. Author of the Hound-Tuner of Callaway.

3—The above are my favourite lines from Dante, and I have never been able to think of them, in connection with the immortal exile, without tears.

Sometimes they bring before me the noble, high-minded patriot exiled from the city that he loved, coming down the "Stranger's stairs" in the palace of Can Grande with the echo of his footsteps, like the heavy thud of a murderous ax falling upon his sensitive and bleeding heart; or again lonely Ravenna, that city who in her ancient grandeur held court for princes of Church and State; where great leaders of men, both Roman and Goth brought their host, and Dante sitting in the Pineta, the pine forest of Ravenna, the "selva oscura," where he composed his immortal lines.

Solitude and sorrow are the grim angels leading him up and down the stranger's stairs until he fathoms to the supremest heights and to the lowest depths the mystery of life. And as I write, the convent bell sounds the vesper hour, and in fancy I hear another bell ringing, and the tones float out over the valley of Ravenna, and mingle with the murmur of the pines. And Dr. Biagi, the Florentine, who set the silver notes ringing, and every Florentine who heard their tone, must have breathed a prayer of atonement to the lonely exile. And the pines whispered a world's gratitude.

SISTER MARY AGATHA O'NEIL ("Beatrice Gaule"), Mt. Saint Mary's Academy, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Author of Quality and Breath of Dante's Appeal.

4—In the immense cycle of the Divine Comedy nothing casts more brilliant light than these lines, coming, as they do,

from the most intimate personality of Dante. Vehement soul, tender heart, noble, proud character, heart-stricken sufferer! He weeps in accents of elegy or satire, which already have all the bitter flavour of the autobiographies of the Romanticists of the nineteenth century.

Oh "how salt with tears doth taste another's bread," far away from everything beloved most dearly! Oh "to climb another's stairs, how hard a path!" And especially how agonizing "will lie heaviest on thy shoulders," the ingratitude, malice and betrayal by companions! What a dolorous balance-sheet, what a moving picture of excruciating experience! But how misfortune exalts his pride! "Their brows and not thine will redden for it." It is for them, not for him, to weep.

This whole passage, it seems to me, furnishes us with the key to the Poet's psychology, and to his complex Comedy.

The enchantment of his sublime visions of the Hereafter, and the work of his gigantic art are, after all, only a palliative for the writer and a diversion for the condition of his exile and for his disappointments, as a man and citizen. Sodden with tears, this genius, disciple of Aquinas, devotes himself to the immortal beauty of things divine. As a disillusioned but avenging Sage, he speaks of the intolerable deformity of things mortal. The latter, and not the former, make one blush. Today, as in his time, is not the Divine Comedy a trumpet-call to Duty?

ÉMILE HOFFET, Lay brother of Mary Immaculate, Paris, France, Author of Papal Theology.

DANTE JUSTIFIED FOR HIS WITHDRAWAL FROM EVIL COMPANY.

"Di sua bestialità il suo processo
farà la prova; sì ch' a te fia bello
averti fatta parte per te stesso." 67-69.

"Of their brutishness their own procedure shall give proof; so that it shall be seemly for thee to have made thyself a party by thyself."

COMMENT.

These verses are vibrant with lofty indignation. They are, on the other hand, a formula of a beguiling individualism if they only detail a cruel experience suffered at the hands of

fortune or of men. I like to see in these verses a solemn affirmation of the supremacy of intelligence over the gregarious actions of political parties. Technically the last line and a half are of rare vigor, with the triple rolling of the "r" blending with the stroke of the "t" repeated as often as six times.

ALPHONSE BAYOT, Professor of Romance Languages, University of Louvain, Belgium. Author of La Gioventù di Dante e la Vita Nuova.

CANTO XVIII.

DANTE ENRAPTURED BY THE BEAUTY OF BEATRICE.

Tanto poss' io di quel punto ridire,
che, rimirando lei, lo mio affetto
libero fu da ogni altro disire,
fin che il piacere etterno, che diretto
raggiava in Beatrice, dal bel viso
mi contentava col secondo aspetto.
Vincendo me col lume d' un sorriso,
ella mi disse: "Volgiti ed ascolta;
chè non pur ne' miei occhi è paradiso." 13-21.

This much only can I recount of that moment, that, again beholding her, my affection was free from every other desire. While the Joy Eternal, which was raying directly upon Beatrice, from her lovely eyes was rendering me happy with its reflected aspect, she, vanquishing me with the light of a smile, said to me. "Turn thee, and hearken, for not only in my eyes is Paradise."

COMMENT.

1—On the emotional and sentimental side I cannot think of any better passage than lines 14 and 15.

STEPHEN H. BUSH, Iowa City, Iowa. Head of Department of Romance Languages, University of Iowa, Author of The Dry Bones of Language Teaching.

2—This passage occurs near the end of Dante's interview with Cacciaguida and immediately after the discussion of the Poet's proper attitude towards the problems of his later life. My reasons for admiring this passage include its evident

merits of beautiful style and of illustrating by graceful allegory the true nature of beatitude. But I find even stronger a more subjective and personal reason. The passage suggests to me that love should not divert the attention from what is spiritual, wise and noble but rather should further aspiration, and that the really admirable woman will think less of being admired by her lover, however worthily, than of helping him to enter a finer spiritual life.

WILMON BREWER, Ph.D., Hingham, Mass. Translator of Dante's Eclogues in blank verse.

DANTE'S ASCENT TO THE HEAVEN OF JUPITER.

E come, per sentir più dilettanza
bene operando, l' uom di giorno in giorno
s' accorge che la sua virtute avanza,
sì m' accors' io che 'l mio girar dintorno
col cielo insieme avea cresciuto l' arco,
veggendo quel miracol più adorno. 58-63.

And as by feeling more delight in well-doing, a man becomes aware that his virtue is advancing from day to day, so I became aware that my circling round together with the Heaven had increased its arc, when I saw the Marvel (Beatrice) still more adorned.

COMMENT.

My connection with the Dante Society for some twenty years has led me, more and more, to marvel at the exquisite art with which Dante alludes to images in nature, and also to admire the vast field of his observation. The foregoing verses and lines 137-138 of Paradiso XXVI are instances of this great power of the Poet.

AGNES BADEN POWELL, Executive of the Dante Society of London, England.

CANTO XIX.

HUMAN INTELLECT, A RAY OF THE DIVINE MIND.

Nostra veduta, che convene
essere alcun de' raggi de la mente. 52-53.

Our sight which must be one of the rays of the Mind (Divine).

COMMENT.

This passage embraces the true idea of the Creator who, eternally unlimited, puts limits upon all creatures, unlike the god of pantheism, He is not fused into the universe. He, indeed, penetrates all creation and His Kingdom is infinite. But He, as Divine Personality, is not absorbed into the work of His hands. Participating by reason and revelation in the Supreme Light we become God's co-workers and are consecrated by our knowledge of the secrets of the Deity and the mystery of the human soul. So there opens up to every human spirit a celestial realm of the wonderful possibilities of knowledge.

ELSE HASSE, Schandau a. Elbe, Germany, Translator of Göttliche Komödie.

THE EAGLE DECLARES THAT GOD, THE DIVINE LIGHT, IS NECESSARY TO DISPEL THE DARKNESS OF OUR MINDS.

Lume non è, se non vien dal sereno
che non si turba mai; anzi è tenebra,
od ombra de la carne, o suo veleno. 64-67.

Light there is none but that which comes from the Serene which is never clouded; (without it) there is darkness or shadow of the flesh, or its poison (sin).

COMMENT.

This passage is complemented by line 70 of Paradiso XXV.

Ideas, thoughts, argumentations of science, of art, and of faith, are to me frail and vain if they are not filled with the truth of God. Light, true and eternal, in an idea, a thought or argumentation, is the sun which radiates from God. Without His light there is darkness of pride or poison of flesh. So my faith, as a poet, is upheld by Dante's judgment expressed in the foregoing beautiful words. And my experience as a student, intent upon the ideal, gives me convincing authority to persuade others that "From many stars cometh this light to me."

GIUSEPPE CARTELLA GELARDI, Milan, Italy. Author of Alba Canora.

CANTO XXI.

IN THE HEAVEN OF SATURN BEATRICE SMILES NOT, LEST HER BEAUTY SHOULD PARALYZE DANTE'S MORTAL SENSES.

"Chè la bellezza mia, che per le scale
de l' etterno palazzo più s' accende,
com' hai veduto, quanto più si sale,
se non si temperasse, tanto splende,
che il tuo mortal podere, al suo fulgore,
sarebbe fronda che trono scoscende." 7-12.

"For my beauty, as thou hast seen, is kindled along the steps of the Eternal Palace, the higher we ascend; and were it not tempered, at its effulgence thy mortal power would be like a branch shattered by the thunderbolt."

COMMENT.

The plan, the glory, the passion of the Paradiso flame before the memory in those lines; they are also profoundly suggestive of the measurement and beatitude of spiritual progress.

CHARLES ALLEN DINSMORE, D.D., Professor of the Spiritual Interpretation of Literature, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Author of The Teachings of Dante, Aids to the Study of Dante, etc.

THE HEAVENLY LADDER. ST. PETER DAMIEN ANSWERS DANTE'S QUESTION CONCERNING PREDESTINATION.

"Io veggio ben" diss' io, "sacra lucerna,
come libero amore in questa corte
basta a seguir la provedenza etterna;
ma questo è quel ch' a cerner mi par forte,
perchè predestinata fosti sola
a questo officio tra la tue consorte." 73-78.

"Full well, O sacred Lamp, do I see," I said, "how the free will of love suffices in this court for following the Eternal Providence. But this is what seems to me hard to discern, why thou alone among thy consorts wast predestined for this office."

COMMENT.

In the vast silence of the Heaven of Saturn, a silence that to Dante appears even graver because of the new austerity assumed by Beatrice, there appears a Ladder of golden colour. It is the Ladder which Jacob at Bethel saw in a dream. This mystic Ladder represents both the descent of Christ from Heaven to earth to take on human nature, and the going up of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land.

Di color d' oro in che raggio traluce
vid' io uno scaleo eretto in suso
tanto, che nol seguiva la mia luce. 28-30.

(I saw, of the colour of gold on which a sunbeam is shining a Ladder rising up so high that my sight was unable to follow it.)

Down the Ladder came swift sparkling stars, more numerous than those of the firmament. They stop at a certain step of the Ladder, and then, with a variety of allegorical movements, they move about in different and opposite directions, some returning whence they came, others going forward, not to return, and still others passing from one to another. Among the splendours that remain, one approaches the Poet and becomes inexpressibly brilliant, to make known its beatitude. It is the spirit of St. Peter Damien.

The words of Damien had been a lamp to Dante's feet, a light to his mind. It is meet that in God's kingdom this saint, among the thousands of contemplatives, should be more joyful than the others and that he should manifest his joy both by his movements and the brilliance of his appearance. The Poet understands that Damien has been assigned by Divine Love to welcome him. But why was this spirit, and not another among the myriad of contemplatives, predestined for this office? In an outburst of holy exultation the spirit declares that neither he nor the Cherubim nor the Seraphim can answer that question, since no creature has been endowed with intellect comprehensible enough to fathom this mystery which lies in the very being of God.

The veil here is so thin that it is easily penetrated. In the Hereafter the Poet is revealing a problem which perplexed him upon earth. In life's pilgrimage here he had before him

the innumerable penitential methods described by the Fathers of the Church. Freely might he have chosen these itineraries for his theological ascent from the world to God. The one that actually appealed to him, as best suited for the realization of his religious and artistic ideals, was that which represented the passage of the Jews from the bondage of Egypt to the glory of the Promised Land, as symbolical of man's passage from time to eternity. That itinerary had been described and interpreted in a singular way by St. Peter Damien. So in this canto the Poet follows the figuration of this great contemplative to answer the question raised in regard to predestination. In the answer's implication is the imagined idea that Damien alone was chosen from eternity to put forth an authoritative decision concerning the impenetrability of the mystery.

PAULO AMADUCCI, President Liceo della Repubblica di San Marino, Italy. Author of Nel Cielo dei Comtemplanti.

CANTO XXII.

OUR WORLD IN SPACE.

"Tu se' sì presso a l' ultima salute"
cominciò Beatrice, "che tu dei
aver le luci tue chiare ed acute.
E però, prima che tu più t' inlei,
rimira in giù, e vedi quanto mondo
sotto li piedi già esser ti fei;
sì che 'l tuo cor, quantunque può, giocondo
s' appresenti a la turba triunfante
che lieta vien per questo etera tondo."
Col viso ritornai per tutte quante
le sette spere, e vidi questo globo
tal, ch' io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante;
e quel consiglio per migliore approbo
che l' ha per meno; e chi ad altro pensa
chiamar si puote veramente probo. 124-138.

"Thou art so near unto the Supreme Salvation (God)," began Beatrice, "that thou oughtest to have thine eyes clear and sharp. And therefore before thou dost enter further therein, look down once more and see how vast a space I have already set beneath thy feet, in order

that thy heart, rejoicing to its utmost, may present itself to the triumphant throng which comes exultant through this rounded ethereal sphere." With my gaze I took my way back through each and all the seven spheres, and saw this globe of ours such (i.e. so small) that I smiled at its sorry semblance, and that counsel I approve as best which holds it of least account; and he who turns his thoughts elsewhere (i.e. to heavenly things) may be called truly upright.

COMMENT.

I have selected this passage because it so clearly shows the insignificant size and relative unimportance of our tiny atom of star-dust, and encourages us to leap out of the planetary ship, on which we are embarked for our mortal journey, into starry space, to view our small point of light from the Cosmos. Seen in perspective how small are earthly ambitions and passions!

Camille Flammarion, calling attention to the fact that "forty millions of men are killed regularly every century in order to maintain the microscopical divisions of a little globule into several ant-hills," was led to remark: "When men know something of the earth and understand the modest position of our planet in infinity, and appreciate better the grandeur and beauty of nature, they will be fools no longer, but will live in peace; in the fertile study of Truth; in the contemplation of the Beautiful; in the practice of Good; in the progressive development of Reason; and in the noble exercise of the higher faculties of Intelligence."

ESTHER SINGLETON, Editor and translator, New York City. Author of Florence, How to Visit the English Cathedrals, etc.

CANTO XXIII.

BEATRICE PREPARES DANTE'S MIND FOR THE GLORIOUS VISION OF THE REDEEMED AND OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER.

Come l' augello, intra l' amate fronde,
posato al nido de' suoi dolci nati
la notte che le cose ci nasconde,
che, per veder li aspetti disiati
e per trovar lo cibo onde li pasca,
in che gravi labor li sono aggrati,

previene il tempo in su aperta frasca,
e con ardente affetto il sole aspetta,
fiso guardando pur che l' alba nasca;
così la donna mia stava eretta
e attenta, rivolta inver la plaga
sotto la quale il sol mostra men fretta:
sì che, veggendola io sospesa e vaga,
fecimi qual è quei che disiando
altro vorria, e sperando s' appaga.
Ma poco fu tra uno e altro quando,
del mio attender, dico, e del vedere
lo ciel venir più e più rischiarando.
E Beatrice disse: "Ecco le schiere
del triunfo di Cristo e tutto il frutto
ricolto del girar di queste spere!"
Pariemi che 'l suo viso ardesse tutto,
e li occhi avea di letizia sì pieni,
che passar men convien sanza costrutto.
Quale ne' plenilunii sereni
Trivia ride tra le ninfe etterne
che dipingon lo ciel per tutti i seni,
vidi sopra migliaia di lucerne
un sol che tutte quante l' accendea,
come fa il nostro le viste superne;
e per la viva luce trasparea
la lucente sustanza tanto chiara
nel viso mio, che non la sostenea.
Oh Beatrice dolce guida e cara!
Ella mi disse: "Quel che ti sobranza
è virtù da cui nulla si ripara.
Quivi è la sapienza e la possanza
ch' aprì le strade tra 'l cielo e la terra,
onde fu già si lunga disianza." 1-40.

Even as the bird, amidst the beloved foliage, reposing on the nest of her sweet brood through the night which hides all things from us, and who in order to see their longed-for faces, and to find food wherewith she may feed them, (a task), in which heavy toils are pleasing to her, anticipates the time (by flying) upon an open branch, and with ardent affection awaits the sun, fixedly watching till the dawn shall break; thus was my Lady standing erect and attentive, turned towards that region under which the sun shows his least speed; so that I, seeing her thus in suspense and eager, became like him who in desire yearns after

something and is content with his very hope. But short was the interval between one moment and the other, that of my expectancy, I mean, and of my seeing the heavens become brighter and brighter. And Beatrice said: "Behold the hosts of the Triumph of Christ, and the fruit harvested by the revolution of these spheres."

It seemed to me that her countenance was all aflame, and her eyes were so full of joy that I must needs pass it by without description.

As in the clear full-mooned skies Trivia (the Moon) smiles among the eternal nymphs, who paint the heaven through all its depths, so saw I, above myriad of lights, a Sun that was enkindling each and all of them, even as our sun enkindles the stars on high; and through that living light the lucent Substance (Christ in His Glorified Body) shone so brightly upon my face that I could not bear it.

O Beatrice, sweet guide and dear! She said to me: "That which overcomes thee is a Power from which nothing can shield itself. Therein is the Wisdom and the Power (i.e. Christ) that opened the roads between Heaven and Earth, for which (opening) there had already been such long desire.

COMMENT.

1—I like to co-ordinate with this passage Inf. III, 1, 9 and Purgatorio V, 100, 108. Then the three passages, characteristic of Dante's power, help us to understand why the intellectual élite of the world has unanimously signalized him,

(a) from the standpoint of the science of religion, as *Theologus Dantes nullius dogmatis expers:*

(b) from the standpoint of sacred art, as "the greatest imaginative genius of the Catholic Faith" (Rognon).

Jean-Alphonse Dommergues, honorary canon of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris.

2—As an assiduous student of the sublime beauties hidden in the Divine Comedy, the sacred poem so profoundly human, I am certain that the first four *terzine,* descriptive of maternal solicitude, form poetry so very simple, noble and delicate that it softens the heart. At times upon re-reading this passage I am moved to tears. I think of my dear, dead mother. Even in Heaven she will pray for me, as her desire to see again her son will continue until his soul will be safely united with hers.

Antonio Bellucci, Priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, Naples, Italy.

NIGHT.

La notte che le cose ci nasconde. 3.

The night which hides all things from us.

COMMENT.

In his vision of the Car of Beatrice Dante's imagery is, as Botticelli's design proves to us, marvelously pictorial. His smaller imagery, all those similes of which he shows us the reflection before we see the thing, have, on the contrary, a homely naturalness which sets us wondering afterwards how simple a statement of fact can have turned into such great poetry. Think of all that poets have said about night, and then hear Dante:

La notta che le cose ci nasconde.

ARTHUR SYMONS, Wittersham, Kent, England. Author of The Romantic Movement in English Poetry.

MOONLIGHT.

Quale ne' plenilunii sereni
Trivia ride tra le ninfe etterne
che dipingon lo ciel per tutti i seni. 25-27.

As in the clear full-mooned skies Trivia (the Moon) smiles among the eternal nymphs, who paint the heaven through all its depths.

COMMENT.

1—Of all Dante's wonderful poem my own favourite passage here quoted is the first two lines. The third is also beautiful, but it is not so purely divine.

I think all the essence of beauty and the very soul of harmony and the poetry of a quiet, silvery moonlight sleeping upon the earth, have been, by some mysterious charm, rapt up in the soft and powerful music of these syllables. I cannot but think of them whenever there is a particularly beautiful night! Of all the learned, deep, great poetry of Dante, these two or three simple lines are my favourite.

MARGHERITA S. SARFATTI, Cavallasca, Como, Italy. Author of Duce, the authorized biography of Benito Mussolini, Editor of Gerarchia, the Monthly Review of Politics.

2—The line: *"Trivia ride fra le ninfe etterne,"* (26), is literally a common figure borrowed from mythology: a goddess in the midst of a retinue of nymphs. But the enchanting music of Dante's verse completely surpasses the vision of this initial picture, and sings of all the splendour of a moonlight among the flowers of a night in May. Midas changed into gold whatever he touched: Dante transforms into divine poetry the simplest thing that might have come to him, even in his elementary school days.

CAESAR DE LOLLIS, Professor, University of Rome, Italy. Editor of La Cultura, Rivista Mensile.

DANTE CANNOT DESCRIBE MANY OF THE THINGS OF HEAVEN BECAUSE THEY ARE INEFFABLE.

Ma chi pensasse il ponderoso tema
e l' omero mortal che se ne carca,
nol biasmerebbe se sott' esso trema.
Non è pileggio da picciola barca
quel che fendendo va l' ardita prora,
nè da nocchier ch' a se medesmo parca. 64-69.

But he who ponders on the weighty theme, and considers the mortal shoulder which is laden therewith, will not upbraid, if under this it trembles. This is no passage for a little bark, that my intrepid prow goes cleaving, nor for a helmsman who would spare himself.

COMMENT.

This canto has for its argument the apparition of the Celestial Court, and "The weighty theme" is the description of Paradise. The superlative difficulty of the argument, in my opinion, could not find a more precise expression than that contained in the two *terzine* quoted above. The passage deeply moves me, because for a long time I have been facing themes weighty but not heavenly.

COUNT GIUSEPPE VOLPI DI MISURATI, Minister of Finance, Rome, Italy.

CANTO XXIV.

DANTE, EXAMINED BY ST. PETER, MAKES A PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Fede è sustanza di cose sperate,
ed argomento de le non parventi;
e questa pare a me sua quiditate. 64-66.

. . . . . .

Appresso uscì de la luce profonda
che lì splendeva: "Questa cara gioia
sopra la quale ogni virtù si fonda,
onde ti venne?" E io: "La larga ploia
de lo Spirito Santo ch' è diffusa
in su le vecchie e 'n su le nuove cuoia,
è sillogismo che la m' ha conchiusa
acutamente sì, che 'nverso d' ella
ogni dimostrazion mi pare ottusa."
Io udi' poi: "L' antica e la novella
proposizion che così ti conchiude
perchè l' hai tu per divina favella?"
E io: "La prova che 'l ver mi dischiude
son l' opere seguite, a che natura
non scaldò ferro mai nè battè incude."
Risposto fummi: "Dì, chi t' assicura
che quell' opere fosser? Quel medesmo
che vuol provarsi, non altri, il ti giura."
"Se 'l mondo si rivolse al cristianesmo"
diss' io "sanza miracoli, quest' uno
è tal, che li altri non sono il centesmo;
chè tu intrasti povero e digiuno
in campo, a seminar la buona pianta
che fu già vite e ora è fatta pruno." 88-111

. . . . . .

Comincia' io, "tu vuoi ch' io manifesti
la forma qui del pronto creder mio,
e anche la cagion di lui chiedesti.
E io rispondo: Io credo in uno Dio
solo ed etterno, che tutto il ciel move,
non moto, con amore e con disio.
E a tal creder non ho io pur prove
fisice e metafisice, ma dalmi
anche la verità che quinci piove

per Moisè, per profeti e per salmi,
per l' Evangelio e per voi che scriveste
poi che l' ardente Spirto vi fè almi.
E credo in tre persone etterne, e queste
credo una essenza sì una e sì trina,
che soffera congiunto 'sono' ed 'este.'
De la profonda condizion divina
ch' io tocco mo, la mente mi sigilla
più volte l' evangelica dottrina.
Quest' è il principio, quest' è la favilla
che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace,
e come stella in cielo in me scintilla." 127-147.

"Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not, and this to me seems to be the essence of it." 64-67.

. . . . . .

Then issued from the deep light, that was glowing there: "This precious jewel upon which all virtue is founded, whence came it to thee?" And I: "The abundant shower of the Holy Ghost, which is poured forth over the Old and over the New Testament, is a syllogism which has proved it to me so trenchantly, that, compared with it, every demonstration seems to me obtuse." Then I heard: "The Old and the New Proposition which so convince thee,—why dost thou hold them for the Divine Word?" And I: "The proofs which disclose the truth to me are the works (the miracles) that followed (the Word), for which nature never yet heated iron, nor smote anvil." It was replied to me: "Say, who vouches to thee that these works ever took place? The very thing itself which requires to be proved, and none other, swears it to thee." "If the world," said I, "was converted to Christianity without miracles, this alone is such that the others are not a hundredth part of it, for thou (St. Peter) didst enter poor and unfed into the field to sow the goodly plant, which once was a vine and now has become a thorn-bush." 88-111.

. . . . . .

I began: "Thou wishest that I should declare here the form of my ready belief, and thou askest also of its cause;" And I answer: "I believe in One God, Sole and Eternal, who, Himself unmoved doth move all the Heavens with love and desires. And for such faith I have not only proofs physical and metaphysical, but it is given to me likewise by the Truth that is shed from here through Moses, through the Prophets and through the Psalms, through the Gospel and through you who wrote after the Holy Spirit had made you its sustainers. And I believe in Three Eternal Persons, and these I believe to be one Essence, so One and

so Trine that it will admit to be conjoined with *are* and *is*. Of the profound divine condition on which I touch, the doctrine of the Gospel ofttimes sets the seal upon my mind. This is the principle; this is the spark which then dilates into a living flame, and, like a star in heaven, it scintillates within me." 130-147.

COMMENT.

1—In the last *terzina* Dante seals his profession of Christian faith, which he already made to St. Peter. It is my favourite passage. I quote it often and willingly remember it above all others, because in it the Poet, in strikingly intense words, declares the possession of that religious faith which is the very soul of the whole Comedy.

CARLO STEINER, College Professor, Turin, Italy.

2—This passage seems the summary of Dante's entire work. Religious, philosophical, theological, historical, dramatic and encyclopedical though this great poem is, above all else it is the cry of the faith and mystical love of an inspired writer. The very distribution of the Triology is an act of faith: one hundred cantos—one for the general introduction, and *thirty-three,* the mystical number of the years of Christ, for each of the other three parts. The whole work lives upon "the substance of things to be hoped for" and sets forth "the evidence of things that appear not." Is there a poet in this century of progress who puts all his knowledge and all his genius, as does Dante, in a *Credo* so sublime?

JANE NORLAND (pseudonym of Jane Ehrlich), Publicist and writer, Versailles, France.

CANTO XXV.

IF THE RENOWN OF DANTE'S POEM BRINGS ABOUT A RECALL FROM HIS EXILE, HE MAY, PERCHANCE, RECEIVE THE LAUREL CROWN IN THE BAPTISTERY OF FLORENCE.

Se mai continga che 'l poema sacro
al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,
sì che m' ha fatto per più anni macro,
vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra
del bello ovile ov' io dormi' agnello,
nimico ai lupi che li danno guerra;

con altra voce omai, con altro vello
ritornerò poeta; ed in sul fonte
del mio battesmo prenderò 'l cappello. 1-9.

If it ever happen that the sacred poem to which both Heaven and Earth have set their hand, so that it has made me lean for many years, should overcome the cruelty that bars me out from the fair sheepfold, where as a lamb I slept, an enemy to the wolves that make war upon it; there with other voice, with other fleece, shall I return, a poet, and at the font of my baptism, receive the chaplet.

COMMENT.

1—In my opinion, in no other passage of the sublime Trilogy of the great Florentine Poet is there to be found such a synthesis of the personal and pathetic, in the tragic life of Dante, as in the above lines in the Paradiso. Surely Earth and Heaven were co-partners, in the creation and chrism of its poetic power and beauty. *Bellissima Firenze* was to Dante, indeed, *un bello ovile*—"A fair sheepfold"; and *San Giovanni,* at whose font Beatrice and Dante received the Sacrament of Baptism on probably the same day, contains the most hallowed of the great Poet's memories.

THOMAS O'HAGAN, Ph.D., Litt.D., LL.D., Professor of English Literature, St. Joseph's College, Adrian, Mich. Author of Studies in Poetry, With Staff and Scrip, etc.

2—I own a small edition of the Divine Comedy by Aldo Manuzio, published in 1502. It follows me in all my travels. I love it, even venerate it, as a gift sent me by a great scholar, protector and friend.

Many generations must have rejoiced and wept over its bright pages and found strength of soul in meditating upon them. Many, indeed, are the marginal notes and the comments of the different characters that it has inspired. Many are the underlined passages. Amongst the most noted lyric passages at which the whole world for six centuries has paused and been moved are those of Paola and Francesca, Farinata degli Uberti, Il Conte Ugolino, the Meeting of Sordello, and the Invective against Italy. In these passages, the Poet has succeeded in creating a "sensation" in a manner both unsurpassed and unsurpassable. These passages are not read, they

are lived. They are lived, just like our every day reality, with all the five senses. The poetic imagery touches and enraptures you. It is there, plastic, evident, sonorous, tangible, imperious.

But in the passage quoted above, the Poet feels that the crowning of his cruel and joyous labor is near at hand. He rises for an instant to contemplate no longer the worlds created by him, but a world in which he drags along his solitary, vagrant existence. His mind is no longer centered upon the woes and hopes of mankind but upon his own misery and expectation. Clearly does he place before us his heart, lacerated and bleeding, and with it, for the first and last time, he sings of his own person.

This brief passage, contains the great drama of the Poet and is, I should say, the "Ecce Homo" of the Dantean Golgotha. Dante could have written it only while weeping. He could have re-read the last *terzina,* only while smiling as radiantly as he was humanly jubilant.

GIORGIO UMANI, Poet and Essayist, Ancona, Italy.

CANTO XXVI.

ST. JOHN EXAMINES DANTE ON LOVE. THE POET DECLARES THAT, KNOWING GOD, ONE OF NECESSITY MUST LOVE HIM.

E io: "Per filosofici argomenti
e per autorità che quinci scende
cotale amor convien che in me s' imprenti. 25-28.

And I: "By philosophic arguments and by authority, which descends from here, such love must needs be impressed on me."

COMMENT.

I love to meditate on this passage of the immortal poet, for it conveys a most profound truth about man's perfection, excellence.

"Per filosofici argomenti."—Philosophy is the guide of life for it leads us to what is really true, good, and beautiful. But its scope is limited: it cannot transcend the order of nature.

"E per autorità che quinci scende." It is Divine authority

and grace that introduce us into another world, the world of Redemption and sanctification.

"Cotale amor convien che in me s' imprenti."—The light of reason and that of Faith transform us: they introduce into the very fibers of our souls the living God who replenishes us with every good, natural and supernatural, and causes us to diffuse it abroad for the benefit of those who are our brothers —brothers by the same human nature, and brothers in the sonship of the Blessed Trinity.

That is the doctrine I perceive and admire in those lines of Dante who was so deeply penetrated with the teachings of the Angelic Doctor—St. Thomas.

JOHN TARASEVICH, M.S., Ph.D., S.T.D., Kleshniaki, White Russia.

OVERWHELMED BY THE PRESENCE OF ADAM, DANTE QUICKLY STRAIGHTENS HIMSELF UP AGAIN, TO CONVERSE WITH THE FATHER OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.

Come la fronda, che flette la cima
nel transito del vento e poi si lieva
per la propria virtù che la sublima,
fec' io in tanto in quant' ella diceva. 85-88.

Even as the bough that bends down its top at the passing of the wind, and then springs up again by its own power which raises it, so did I in amazement the while she was speaking.

COMMENT.

1—In these few lines of Dante there is condensed one of the greatest maxims for life. When the storm dashes down on us we must bow our heads to the inevitable, but when it has passed by, we must lift up our heads again in courage. Thus, the storm of misfortune has not altered our resolve or weakened our purpose.

WALKER F. STARKIE, University professor, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.

2—In this wonderful simile I almost hear the echo of the celestial consolation experienced by the Poet after he had gloriously passed his examination in the three divine virtues.

The words make one feel faith in the divine destiny of man; hope that glows amidst the most violent gusts of the tempest of the soul, the hope in the serene light that shines above the darkest cloud; love for our fellow-beings, that prevents us from despair of their salvation, if they have fallen into evil, and makes us put trust in the fruit of our efforts, which are never in vain, when they are directed to the betterment of our brethren.

This is why, as a father and an educator, I often repeat these verses especially the line "Per la propria virtù che la sublima," in personal sorrows and social intercourse.

Francesco Milano, President of the Liceo Ginnasio di Lanciano, Italy.

CANTO XXVII.

THE HYMN OF HEAVEN.

"Al Padre, al Figlio, a lo Spirito Santo"
cominciò "gloria!" tutto il paradiso,
sì che m' inebriava il dolce canto.
Ciò ch' io vedeva mi sembiava un riso
de l' universo; per che mia ebbrezza
intrava per l' udire e per lo viso.
Oh gioia! oh ineffabile allegrezza!
oh vita integra d' amore e di pace!
oh sanza brama sicura ricchezza! 1-9.

"Glory be to the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Ghost," all Paradise began, so that the sweet song intoxicated me. What I saw, appeared to me one smile of the Universe; for my intoxication entered into me both by hearing and by sight. O joy! O ineffable delight! O life entire of love and peace! O riches secure from any other longing!

COMMENT.

As an antidote to the dim and humdrum ideas of the Eternal Glory which most of us, it is to be feared, suffer from in these utilitarian days, surely nothing could be finer than the celestial splendours depicted in the "Paradiso"—whether it be those unequalled lines imaging the state of Mary, Queen of Heaven, or the joy of the Heavenly Host in the Everlast-

ing Trinity—lines whose original power reach us even through translation.

ELEANOR ROGERS COX, New York City. Author of Latter Day Poetry of Ireland.

HOPE REALIZED.

"E vero frutto verrà dopo 'l fiore." 148.

"And true fruit shall come after the flower."

COMMENT.

Having to choose a favourite from Dante's verses, a veritable garden blooming with spiritual and æsthetic delights, I give preference to the line quoted above. It has been with me from my youth. It is the motto on my book-plate. The line is very dear to me, because it expresses, with great ardour and clearness of image, the sublime yearning of the soul for higher things, and makes clear that certainty will follow in proportion to the hopes awakened. Herein is found the really great power of man.

LEO POLLINI, Ph.D., Principal of the Dante Alighieri School, Milan, Italy.

CANTO XXVIII.

GOD IS REPRESENTED AS AN INDIVISIBLE POINT RADIATING LIGHT, AND SYMBOLIZING THE UNITY OF THE DIVINITY.

Un punto vidi che raggiava lume
acuto sì, che 'l viso ch' elli affoca
chiuder conviensi per lo forte acume:
e quale stella par quinci più poca,
parrebbe luna, locata con esso
come stella con stella si colloca. 16-21.

. . . . . .

La donna mia, che mi vedea in cura
forte sospeso, disse: "Da quel punto
depende il cielo e tutta la natura." 40-42.

I saw a Point that was raying out light so piercing that the eyes, on which it blazes, must needs close on account of its keen intensity.

And whatever star seems smallest from the earth would seem a moon, if placed beside it, as star with star is placed. 16-21.

. . . . . .

My Lady who beheld me in toil of deep suspense, said: "On that Point depend Heaven and all nature." 40-42.

COMMENT.

1—If we co-ordinate this whole canto with Par. X, XXV and XXVII,—passages which exhibit so wonderfully the craftsmanship and genius of Dante, we shall conclude that the Divine Comedy, without being in the scriptural sense an inspired book, is indeed a kind of a Vision of Patmos. Did not Dante himself declare that both Heaven and Earth had set their hand to his sacred poem? With the immortal Beatrice as his guide, he leads us into Paradise, the holy kingdom of Light, Beatitude, Peace and Love, where the glories of the Blessed Trinity are celebrated in eternal hosannas, and where there is "Joy that transcends every sweetness of delight."

BERTHEM-BONTOUX (pseudonym of Bertha Bontoux), Versailles, France. Member of the Société des Gens de Lettres. Author of Les Mots du Ciel, etc.

2—The eight Heavens through which the Poet has come have been so many stages of preparation for the final vision of Paradise. His eyes have been gradually gaining strength by gazing upon miracles of light and beauty and by seeing truth embodied in many representative forms, to fit him finally to see God in His Essence. Before that consummation, however, one more preparatory vision is necessary. The poet must first see the symbolic image of God. "What!" you may exclaim, "will Dante be audacious enough to attempt to picture the Invisible Himself? Granted that "he is all wings, and pure imagination" can he hope to image the Incomprehensible Being "who only hath immortality and inhabiteth light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen nor can see?" (I Tim. VI, 15). Will he not defeat his purpose by employing a symbol circumscribing Him who is beyond circumscription?" But the genius of Dante does not fail him in his daring undertaking, and this is the more remarkable because, instead of selecting as a symbol something infinitely large, he chooses something atomically small. In the ninth Heaven surrounded

by the nine orders of pure spirits, God is represented "as an indivisible atomic Point radiating light and symbolizing the unity of the Divinity as a fitting prelude to the more intimate vision of the Blessed Trinity which will be vouchsafed in the Empyrean."

On the appropriateness of this symbol Ozanam (*Dante and Catholic Philosophy,* p. 307) makes this interesting comment: "God reveals Himself as necessarily indivisible and, consequently, incapable of having ascribed to Him the abstraction of quantity and quality by which we know creatures: indefinable, because every definition is an analysis which decomposes the subject defined; incomparable, because there are no terms to institute a comparison; so that one may say, giving the words an oblique meaning, that He is infinitely little, that He is nothing. But, on the other hand, that which is without extension, moves without resistance; that which is not to be grasped, cannot be contained; that which can be enclosed within no limits, either actual or logical, is by that very fact limitless. The infinitely little is then also the infinitely great and we may say that it is all." The indivisible atomic Point of intensest light as a symbol of God is indeed a sublime conception of faith and genius that appeals equally to the child, the philosopher and the mystic.

JOHN T. SLATTERY, Ph.D., Troy, N. Y. Quotation from his Dante, The Central Man of All the World, p. 276 (P. J. Kenedy & Sons.)

CANTO XXX.

THE TRANSCENDENT BEAUTY OF BEATRICE.

Ma or convien che mio seguir desista
più dietro a sua bellezza, poetando,
come a l' ultimo suo ciascuno artista.
Cotal qual io la lascio a maggior bando
che quel de la mia tuba, che deduce
l' ardua sua matera terminando. 31-36.

But now it needs must be that my pursuit desist from further following her beauty in poesy, like every artist who reaches the limit of his powers. Such as she is, I leave her to a loftier proclamation than that of my trumpet.

COMMENT.

1—I love best of all to read first this passage, in which Dante, master-mind of all time, owns defeat, leaving the complete description of Beatrice to some later, *greater,* poet—think of it!

And then to turn quickly, ironically, to these other lines below, passages which prove that Dante, alone of earthly minds, can express the ineffable, only he can show us real glimpses of the infinite. Par. XXXIII, 124-127; XXX, 9-23; 124-126; XXXI, 133-138; XXXIII, 76-78, 100-103; ending with the closing of Paradiso, one of the great climaxes in literature:

L'amor che move il sole e d' altre stelle.

LILY LOGAN MORRILL, Keene, Virginia.

2—If a preference must be expressed, then I have to proclaim that my favourite passages are the last three cantos. They are the crowning of the whole work. They declare most fully the eminently theocentric character of this Vision of the Three Kingdoms in all their marvelous conformity with the mighty traditions of the Orient and Occident.

RENÉ GUÉNON, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy. Author of L'Ésotérisme de Dante, Paris, France.

THE EMPYREAN HEAVEN OF LIGHT, LOVE AND JOY.

Noi siamo usciti fore
del maggior corpo al ciel ch' è pura luce;
luce intellettual, piena d' amore;
amor di vero ben, pien di letizia;
letizia che trascende ogni dolzore." 38-42.

"We have issued forth from the greatest Sphere to the Heaven which is pure Light: Light intellectual full of love, Love of true good full of Joy, Joy that transcends every sweetness of delight."

COMMENT.

1—It seems to me that Dante in these few words describes, as he alone knows how to do it, the state of Beatitude which awaits the soul of the elect when it arrives *in Patria.*

COUNTESS HORACE DE CHOISEUL, Viry-Chatillon, France.

2—This, my favourite Dantean passage, has adorned my hearth-stone for years as an ever present inspiration. Any added word of comment from me is unnecessary since, as always, Dante speaks the ultimate word and, in this instance, as from another Gospel; that the Truth shall make you *free,* though it make you *sad.*

Edwin Lathrop Baker, College Professor, General Theological Seminary, New York City.

3—I pass over the purely magical lines, the mysterious lines, the dramatic lines, the tender lines, the noble and inspiring lines, and the many marvelous lines which magically invoke the spirit of place, and choose these because they seem to me the quintessence of Dante. Other poets can move us in these other ways; no other has described what could be the bliss of the soul, none other could have ever imagined it.

Ruth Shepard Phelps, Ph.D, Associate professor of Romance Languages, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. Author of Dante and His English Readers.

4—For Dante, Light and Love seem to be equal symbols of the highest essence of the Divine Personality. "Love alone leads us upward and on," and the reasoning of the Philosopher, and the intuition of the Poet reveal the same conclusion. This thirteenth century Poet had a vision of the universe as the scattered leaves of a book bound together by Love; he symbolized it in the unfolding of the Mystic Rose (line 117) that revealed to him the heart of reality. We abase our souls in silent reverence to such genius that has the power to catch and sound the divine harmonies.

L. C. Persons, Miami, Florida.

5—My preference goes to this whole canto. Of its lines, those quoted above delight me most movingly. Why? Because in this part of the Divine Comedy, and in these lines—in many other lines also—we touch upon the highest expression of which an inspired writer is capable. Here we have what is inexpressible, the union of metaphysics and art, of theology and poetry, of mind and heart. Here is a resplendence of truth, a revelation of the divine, like golden flaming clouds, which, though they come between our sight and the sun, let

us gaze upon it. Dante and St. Thomas Aquinas, the two masters of synthesis, are found again in these lines, especially in the line, "Light intellectual full of love." Is not that verse true commentary upon the word of Christ that "the truth shall make you free"?

Count De Reynold, Professor, University of Berne, Switzerland, President of the Catholic Union of International Studies.

6—This Light constitutes the Beatific Vision. Ozanam has pointed out that Indian thought was fairly well known in Italy in Dante's time, but he does not suggest an affinity between Dante's conception of "the Sun and other Stars," and that of the oldest Sages of India and Persia. Yet there would be ground for such a comparison; Light, the Light of the Sun, irradiates all the *Divina Commedia*. We are made to think again and again of the Indian "Gayatri" and of the words of Zarathushtra: "the glorious vision of the Heavenly Lights attainable through sublime Truth." But, perhaps, it is sufficient to suppose that Dante knew intuitively all the secrets of the soul, or followed the doctrine of St. Thomas. The beautiful lines which I have quoted came into my mind when I saw the sun rising in solemn splendour from a sea into which it had never sunk. That was on the North Cape. It was a scene that seemed to me to illustrate Dante's Beatific Vision.

Evelyn Martinengo Cesaresco, Lago di Garda, Italy.

THE RIVER OF LIGHT.

E vidi lume in forma di rivera
fluvido di fulgore, intra due rive
dipinte di mirabil primavera.
Di tal fiumana uscian faville vive,
e d' ogni parte si mettean ne' fiori,
quasi rubin che oro circunscrive.
Poi, come inebriate da li odori,
riprofondavan sè nel miro gurge;
e s' una intrava, un' altra n' uscia fori. 61-69.

And I saw light in the form of a river, blazing with radiance and streaming, between two banks decked with the marvelous flowers of

spring. From out of this great river there issued living sparks, and on every side settled themselves within the flowers, like rubies chased with gold; then, as if inebriated by the odours, they plunged again into the wondrous torrent, and as one entered, another issued forth.

COMMENT.

How can one choose from so many sublime beauties of the Divine Comedy? But since God is Beauty Supreme, I can but repeat these dazzling verses in which the Poet dares express, with human words, the Radiant Vision.

ALFREDO BACCELLI. Senator of the Kingdom, Rome, Italy.

THE RIVER OF LIGHT, TRANSMUTED INTO A CIRCULAR SEA OF RADIANCE, NOW BECOMES THE MYSTIC HEAVENLY ROSE.

Lume è là su che visible face
lo creatore a quella creatura
che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace.
E' si distende in circular figura,
in tanto che la sua circunferenza
sarebbe al sol troppo larga cintura.
Fassi di raggio tutta sua parvenza
reflesso al sommo del mobile primo,
che prende quindi vivere e potenza.
E come clivo in acqua di suo imo
si specchia, quasi per vedersi adorno,
quando è nel verde e ne' fioretti opimo,
sì, soprastando al lume intorno intorno,
vidi specchiarsi in più di mille soglie
quanto di noi là su fatto ha ritorno.
E se l' infimo grado in sè raccoglie
sì grande lume, quanta è la larghezza
di questa rosa ne l' estreme foglie!
La vista mia ne l' ampio e ne l' altezza
non si smarriva, ma tutto prendeva
il quanto e 'l quale di quella allegrezza.
Presso e lontano, lì, nè pon nè leva;
chè dove Dio sanza mezzo governa,
la legge natural nulla rileva. 100-123.

There is a light up there that renders the Creator visible to that creature who, only in beholding Him, hath its own peace; and it stretches

out in circular form so far that its circumference would be too wide a girdle for the Sun. Its whole appearance is made up of a ray reflected upon the summit of the Primum Mobile which draweth thence its life and power.

And as a hillside is mirrored in water at its foot, as though to contemplate its own adornment, when it is gorgeous with verdure and flowers, so, ranged above the Light around and around and mirrored in more than a thousand ranks, I saw all who of us have returned on high. And if the lowest row gather within itself so great a light, how vast is the spread of this Rose in its outermost leaves! My sight lost not itself in the breadth and in the height, but took in all the extent and quality of that joy. In that region proximity and distance neither add nor take away, for where God governs without medium, the natural law does not prevail.

COMMENT.

This passage I have always admired as the supreme conception, perhaps I should say, rather, perception of our poet. The similitude is sublime. It is Dante at his best, as we see him with rapt gaze in the portrait by Bondone.

JOHN J. WYNNE, S.J., New York City. Editor of the Catholic Encyclopedia. Author of Poisoning the Wells, etc.

RAMPANT GREED WILL THRUST AWAY ITALY'S LIBERATOR.

La cieca cupidigia che v' ammalia
simili fatti v' ha al fantolino
che muor per fame e caccia via la balia. 139-141.

The blind cupidity which bewitches you, has made you like a little child that is dying of hunger and yet pushes away his nurse.

COMMENT.

What a terrible reproof that is to all who prefer to satisfy their petty ambitions rather than to sacrifice them for the public good!

ENRICO ARLOTTA, Senator of the Kingdom, Naples, Italy.

CANTO XXXI.

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT SEEN IN THE FORM OF THE HEAVENLY ROSE.

In forma dunque di candida rosa
  mi si mostrava la milizia santa
  che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa;
ma l' altra, che volando vede e canta
  la gloria di colui che la innamora
  e la bontà che la fece cotanta,
sì come schiera d' ape, che s' infiora
  una fiata e una si ritorna
  là dove suo laboro s' insapora,
nel gran fior discendeva che s' adorna
  di tante foglie, e quindi risaliva
  là dove 'l suo amor sempre soggiorna.
Le facce tutte avean di fiamma viva,
  e l' ali d' oro, e l' altro tanto bianco,
  che nulla neve a quel termine arriva.
Quando scendean nel fior, di banco in banco
  porgevan de la pace e de l' ardore
  ch' elli acquistavan ventilando il fianco.
Nè l' interporsi tra 'l disopra e 'l fiore
  di tanta plenitudine volante
  impediva la vista e lo splendore;
  chè la luce divina è penetrante
  per l' universo secondo ch' è degno,
  sì che nulla le puote essere ostante.
Questo sicuro e gaudioso regno,
  frequente in gente antica ed in novella,
  viso e amore avea tutto ad un segno.
Oh trina luce che 'n unica stella
  scintillando a lor vista, sì gli appaga!
  Guarda qua giuso a la nostra procella! 1-30.

In form, then of a white Rose was displayed before me the Sacred Army which Christ in His own blood had made His Spouse; but the other (the Army of the Angels) which, in its flight, sees and sings the glory of Him who enamours it, and the goodness that made it what it is, like a swarm of bees that at one moment alights upon the flowers, and at another returns to where its toil is turned to sweetness, descended into that great Flower which is adorned with so many leaves, and, reascended to where its Love doth ever make sojourn. Their faces were

all of living flame, and their wings of gold, and the rest so white that never does snow attain to such a point. When they descended from rank to rank into the Flower, they imparted somewhat of the peace and ardour that they had acquired by the fanning of their wings. Nor did the interposing of such a flying multitude between what was above and the Flower, obstruct the vision and the resplendence, for the Divine Light so penetrates throughout the universe, according to its merit, that naught can be an obstacle to it. This secure and joyous Kingdom, thronged with people, both of old and modern time, concentrated all its sight and all its love upon One Mark. O Trinal Light, who, glowing in one sole star upon their sight, doth so content them, do Thou look down upon our storm.

COMMENT.

1—When I am studying Dante for the classical allusions and influence, one passage seems pre-eminent; when I am seeking the Biblical allusions, another; when I try to find the underlying thought of all his work, which I take to be that the basic principle and moving force in all things in the heavens and the earth, is the Love of God, other passages rush to my mind. For sheer beauty of thought and expression, the opening lines of Canto XXXI in *Il Paradiso* stand supreme.

CAROLINE SHELDON, Litt.D., Grinnell, Ia., Professor Emeritus of Romance Languages in Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa.

2—I do believe that no passage in the whole Divine Comedy moves me so deeply, and in so many ways, as the one in which Dante describes the Rose of the Blest. Nowhere are sensuous images, born of the intensest love of nature, so completely made the vehicles of facts and significances which utterly transcend both sense and nature. It is the essence of "unfathomable song"; Shelley's idea of exalting the beauty of that which is most beautiful; a music of words for that which is beyond words, an accompaniment which begets understanding. Apart from subject matter, the directness of diction and simplicity of description are sublime. This being so, and the subject matter what it is, the passage will always stand as a vivid witness of the ways of men who learn how to make themselves eternal, as Dante said to Latini, through encompass-

ing utmost truth in forms of utmost beauty; art which through dead time keeps "the everlasting hour."

Alfred Mansfield Brooks, Swarthmore, Pa. Author of Dante, How to Know Him.

3—Is there a canto in which the verses are not full of ecstasy and rapture? But if I must express a preference, I am led to select the last cantos of Paradiso, first by reason of the splendour of their subject-matter, and again by an association of ideas, which evokes memories of my college days when I studied Dante—memories which for many years have been a guide of life to me. Among these last cantos I choose the verses quoted above—verses of striking evidence of true life, of ineffable joy. To these the passage Par. XXVII, 1-9 is an introduction; the comment is furnished by St. Bernard's prayer and the final vision.

Precise, exquisitely sculptured, and glowing with countless spirits, the scene discloses the Elect tranquil on their seats of peace; angels ascending and descending to impart joy and receive it, to gather and give delight and gladness. "Their faces are of living flame, their wings of gold, and the peace and ardour, which they imparted, had been acquired by the fanning of their wings."

The acts described, the verbs and adjectives employed, express complete symmetry and perfect doctrine. The verses, so calm and majestic, are musically harmonized with the subject-matter and show the army of Heaven standing at rest or rustling, as it takes wing to enjoy the very plenitude of vision and song. In "this secure and joyous Kingdom" the Trinal Light, glowing in one single star on all, radiates perfect contentment of Vision and Love.

Pietro Cardinal Maffi, Archbishop of Pisa, Italy. Founder of the Rivista di Scienze, Fisiche e Matematiche.

DANTE'S PRAYER TO THE BLESSED TRINITY FOR LIGHT AND SALVATION.

Oh trina luce che 'n unica stella
scintillando a lor vista, sì gli appaga!
Guarda qua giuso a la nostra procella! 28-30.

O Trinal Light, who, glowing in one sole star upon their sight, doth so content them, do Thou look down upon our storm.

COMMENT.

1—Magnificent is this Dantean prayer to the Eternal Light, whose nature and beauty are concentrated in unity. Absolute beatitude is there. For it we all strive, even in our futile efforts and in the midst of a tempest. The divine Poet brings us into port.

FERNAND LAUDET, Member of the Institute of France (Academy of Moral and Political Sciences), Paris, France.

2—Multum in parvo! Exalting use of the greatest of Christian doctrines in the invocation, recognition of the one ultimate satisfaction for faithful souls in the words "sì gli appaga," is followed with startling and heart-piercing effect by the sudden sharp and agonized appeal of the last line, when, from the serenest bliss of Heaven, Dante turns his swift thought to the cruel storms of earth. These lines, with their haunting cadence, have long seemed to me one of the noblest, most succinct and comprehensive prayers ever offered by the Christian heart. It is a prayer that echoes down the ages, unchanged.

VIDA D. SCUDDER, L.H.D., Professor of English Literature, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass. Author of Social Ideals in English Letters, etc.

DANTE'S PRAYER TO BEATRICE.

"O donna in cui la mia speranza vige,
e che soffristi per la mia salute
in inferno lasciar le tue vestige,
di tante cose quant' i' ho vedute,
dal tuo podere e da la tua bontate
riconosco la grazia e la virtute.
Tu m' hai di servo tratto a libertate
per tutte quelle vie, per tutt' i modi
che di ciò fare avei la potestate.
La tua magnificenza in me custodi,
sì che l' anima mia, che fatt' hai sana,
piacente a te dal corpo si disnodi."
Così orai; e quella, sì lontana
come parea, sorrise e riguardommi;
poi si tornò a l' etterna fontana. 79-93.

"O Lady, in whom my hope is lively, and who, for my salvation, didst suffer to leave thy footprints in Hell, of all and the many things that I have seen, I acknowledge the grace and virtue as coming from thy power and goodness. Thou didst draw me while yet a slave to freedom, by all those ways, by all those methods whereby it was in thy power to do so. Keep thou in me thy munificence so that my soul, which thou hast made sound, may be unloosened from the body, while it is still pleasing in thy sight."

Thus did I pray; and she, so far away as she seemed, smiled and looked upon me, then turned herself to the Eternal Fountain.

COMMENT.

1—I choose this passage, not only for its obvious intrinsic beauty, but because it holds within itself a reminder of everything in the Divine Comedy; because it is a definition of all that Beatrice means; because it is the last and loveliest passage in which she is mentioned, and because of the personal drama one senses between the lines.

HERBERT L. MATTHEWS, New York City. Author of The Divine Comedy of Dante.

2—All the intimate drama of the Comedy is contained in this passage which celebrates the moral and religious purification to which the Poet was impelled by this sublime love for an angelized woman.

From the human hell into which a woman had dragged him in those times when Guido Cavalcanti wrote to him: "E trovati pensar troppo vilmente," the Ideal Woman leads Dante through a Purgatory of sighs and tears into a Paradise of freedom and purity. So, in opposition to the modern degradation of woman as female with love as carnal instinct, there comes with the splendour of ages the Dantean ideal of Woman as Redemptrix. She, by every manner and means, frees man from the tormenting and debasing slavery of the senses, and uplifts him, free and pure, to the heights of goodness, intellect and faith.

Were Dante's ideal to become the guide in the future education of girls, all human life would be transformed and redeemed.

ANGIOLO ORVIETO, Editor of the Marzocco, Florence, Italy.

CANTO XXXIII.

ST. BERNARD'S APOTHEOSIS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. HE IMPLORES HER INTERCESSION IN BEHALF OF DANTE.

"Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio,
umile e alta più che creatura,
termine fisso d' etterno consiglio,
tu se' colei che l' umana natura
nobilitasti sì, che 'l suo fattore
non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.
Nel ventre tuo si raccese l' amore
per lo cui caldo ne l' etterna pace
così è germinato questo fiore.
Qui se' a noi meridiana face
di caritate, e giuso, intra i mortali,
se' di speranza fontana vivace.
Donna, se' tanto grande e tanto vali,
che qual vuol grazia ed a te non ricorre,
sua disianza vuol volar sanz' ali.
La tua benignità non pur soccorre
a chi domanda, ma molte fiate
liberamente al dimandar precorre.
In te misericordia, in te pietate,
in te magnificenza, in te s' aduna
quantunque in creatura è di bontate.
Or questi, che da l' infima lacuna
de l' universo infin qui ha vedute
le vite spiritali ad una ad una,
supplica a te, per grazia, di virtute
tanto, che possa con li occhi levarsi
più alto verso l' ultima salute.
E io, che mai per mio veder non arsi
più ch' i' fo per lo suo, tutti miei prieghi
ti porgo, e priego che non sieno scarsi,
perchè tu ogni nube li disleghi
di sua mortalità co' prieghi tuoi,
sì che 'l sommo piacer li si dispieghi.
Ancor ti priego, regina, che puoi
ciò che tu vuoli, che conservi sani,
dopo tanto veder, li affetti suoi.
Vinca tua guardia i movimenti umani:
vedi Beatrice con quanti beati
per li miei preghi ti chiudon le mani!" 1-39.

Virgin Mother, Daughter of thy Son, humble and exalted above every creature, fixed term of the Eternal Counsel; thou art She who didst so ennoble human nature that its Maker did not disdain to make Himself of His own making. Within thy womb was rekindled that Love through whose warmth this Flower has thus blossomed in the Eternal Peace. Here thou art to us the noonday torch of Charity; and below, among mortals, thou art of hope the ever living fountain. Lady, thou art so great, and so availest that he who would have grace without recourse to thee, seeks in his desires to fly without wings. Thy benignity not only succours him who asks, but, oftentimes, it freely anticipates the supplication. In thee is mercy, in thee pity, in thee munificence, in thee is concentrated whatever of goodness exists in the creature.

He who from the lowest abyss of the universe, far even as here, hath seen the lives of the spirits, one after another, now supplicates thee, of thy grace, for power to such a degree that he may be able with his eyes, to uplift himself still higher to the final beatitude. And I, who for my own vision never burned more ardently than I do for his, offer up to thee all my prayers, and may they not be found insufficient—that with thine own prayers thou mayest dissipate from him all the clouds of his mortality, so that the supreme Bliss may be displayed to him. Further I pray thee, O Queen, who canst do what thou wilt, that thou mayest keep his affection sound, after his so exalted a vision. May thy protection subdue his human passions. Behold how Beatrice with so many saints with clasped hands join in my prayers."

COMMENT.

1—As I listened once to a lovely voice reciting this prayer of St. Bernard to the Virgin, it seemed to me that I had never heard a finer alliance of poetic thought and verbal music.

Richard T. Holbrook, Ph.D., Professor of French, University of California, Berkeley, California. Author of Dante and the Animal Kingdom, Portraits of Dante.

2—The Paradiso is to me the most inspiring portion of the Comedy, and, when I am in the proper mood, the closing canto gives me a thrill such as I experience from no other literature.

Charles Allen Dinsmore, D.D., Professor of the Spiritual Interpretation of Literature, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Author of the Teachings of Dante, Aids to the Study of Dante, etc.

3—I think that for precision of language and depth of thought the lines 4-9 are the ones that I cherish most. The passage is besides the best invocation to the Virgin, if we exclude our Ave Maria.

NINA MORGANA, New York City, Operatic soprano, Metropolitan Opera Co.

4—My favourite passage is this prayer of Saint Bernard to the Virgin. I do not know any definition more precise, richer in meaning, more promissory of graces than that of the truth here expressed—the doctrine of the Incarnation—which was the culminating point of universal history.

GEORGE GOYAU, Member of the French Academy, Paris, France.

5—In Bernard's caressing invocation, miraculous beauty of sound becomes a perfect expression of all that Our Lady has meant in the Church's thought and devotion. It is a perfect jewel of religious poetry. And, perhaps, it is not too much of a digression for me to mention the two other passages that I think of as providing, with Dante's lines, food for a life time of mental prayer—they are St. Thomas' stanza beginning "Se nascens dat in socium," and Francis Thompson's "Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke."

T. LAWRENSON RIGGS, D.D., Chaplain of the Catholic Club of Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

6—Truly all Dante's verses are beautiful, living their intense life in the Absolute. Following the marvelous procession of cadences and images, I stop at this final canto and listen especially to its opening words. In this wonderful Magnificat in which the Poet sings of the Blessed Virgin, I find all his theological and emotional conception of the rôle of Woman, both heavenly and earthly. Dante sees in Beatrice Love Purified, taking him by the hand and leading him to Heaven; in the Virgin Mary, as Queen and Mother, he hails the Dream fulfilled, as she watches over the human soul.

PRINCESS HELEN VACARESCO, Member of the Roumanian Academy. Delegate from Roumania to the League of Nations. Paris, France.

7—It is difficult to say what lines from a great poem one loves best; but I always return to Dante's beautiful and intensely fervent transcription of Bernardine mysticism, with especial pleasure, because it puts that mysticism precisely where it belongs and constitutes one of the most appealing flights of all religious lyricism. The sublimation of emotion or passion into affection is, perhaps, the central notion of the Divina Commedia. Here it is requested, in the spirit of all the noblest Christian sanctity, from her who can do what she will. Nowhere else, it seems to me, is the meaning of Marianism so lucidly and so rapturously phrased.

George N. Shuster, Assistant editor of The Commonweal, New York City. Author of The Catholic Spirit in America.

8—This passage and especially the first verse will remain eternally in the human mind. The words are the expression of a prodigious and solemn art. In it palpitates the lively faith of the Poet, the heavenly love for Mary, Virgin, Mother and Daughter of God.

His firm undying faith comes from the generations of the past, and it summarizes and, at the same time, defines the great question of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. For this reason, Dante places it in the mouth of St. Bernard, raising it to an incontestable proposition above all hypotheses and polemics; in other words, he says: It is not discussible. God is the beginning and the end of all things, and Mary is a scintillating face of that great Prism.

I prefer this verse because to my mind it is the resultant of the Christian ethical thought that the Poet was forming from adolescence in the convent of Santa Croce, and of his meditation upon Franciscan literature.

Giuseppe Nicolsi, College Professor and editor of the Giornale del Jonio, Catania, Italy.

9—Of all the Divina Commedia, I love the Prayer of St. Bernard to Our Lady best. A compendious expression of such beauty of God's Love for man personified in Mary's Grace and beauty—The Virgin Mother of the Son of God described in the human form. My choice is made because the

prayer is a perfect ode. *Faith, piety* and pulsating *charity* are so fully, yet so briefly expressed in reverent yet tenderest words.

The vivid contrasts strike the mind with wonderful truths, and prepare the soul to break forth in sentiments of Faith, then Hope, then Love.

MATTHEW L. FORTIER, S.J., Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Fordham University, New York City.

10—I prefer this passage, first, because in it Dante glorifies the "Virgin Mother, humble and exalted above every creature"; secondly, because he puts these words on the lips of Saint Bernard, Father and Doctor of the Church, who has spoken best on the Blessed Virgin; thirdly because he expresses as a theologian as well as a poet and as a poet as well as a theologian the principal prerogatives of Mary: Virgin and Mother, Humble and Exalted, Eternal Term of the Divine Counsel, Paradise of the Incarnation, Mediatrix of Grace, etc.; fourthly, because he expresses this in terms of exquisite poetry "this Flower has thus blossomed; of hope the ever living fountain; that who would have grace without recourse to thee, seeks in his desires to fly without wings."

JEAN BAINVEL, S.J., Honorary Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Catholic Institute of Paris, France.

11—The poem is so splendidly constructed that the whole is greater than any of its parts, but this particular passage has always appealed poignantly to me, even though I am a Protestant and a Unitarian. It seems to me to have a grandeur and nobility of conception different from anything I know outside of Dante himself, and, possibly, greater dignity and nobility, and, therefore, greater beauty than most of the other passages that linger in my memory.

I do not allude simply to the theological conception which is so felicitously expressed in these very remarkable lines, because from the point of view of the artist, the theology would be subordinate to the epic value. But what has always seemed most marvelous to me is that Dante has been able, by reason of his supreme genius, to voice here, as elsewhere, a theological subject which, in an ordinary man, would take many

pages, and to give in a very few lines very wonderful music.

I believe that James Russell Lowell said somewhere that the man who read the three last cantos of the Paradiso could not do a mean thing for several weeks thereafter. The power of these lines is such that I should be inclined to agree with Lowell's hyperbole, and yet, with all the enchantment of the lines and the wonderful intellectual scope which they demonstrate, the expression is so simple that any little child, who could speak or read Italian, could understand them. So they remain to me, when I read them, a marvel and a mystery—one of the things which takes us out of the commonplaces of existence and shows us the fundamental values of human existence.

HENRY HARMON CHAMBERLIN, Worcester, Mass. Author of Poems, The Master Knot, etc.

12—Some of the happiest memories of my school days are the hours that I spent in reading Dante. It was one of my devoted teachers, to all of whom I am most grateful, who spoke to me one day with glowing enthusiasm of the Divine Poet, "ed or mi accora la cara e buona imagine paterna." It was at the close of the school year that he told me that I could spend my vacation days no more profitably than by reading Dante.

I have often wondered if his vision were prophetic. In view of my after life, I have always felt that this early inspiration to study Dante was something providential, for I was destined to live for many years afterward among the scenes and places which Dante has immortalized, the "bel paese là, dove il sì suona."

I started with the Inferno of the Divina Commedia. In the beginning, and especially during vacation days when lighter books of travel and adventure were calling, I acknowledge that it was quite a struggle. I kept on, however, and gradually found my mind opening to the beauty and imagery both of the language and the theme. I found it a veritable mine of information, religious, historic and philosophical. For mystery, romance and sustained interest I would not exchange it for the most stirring novel of the day. I found my-

self sharing the vicissitudes of the Poet as he followed his vision through the world beyond the grave. I was deeply moved by the historic characters whom he addressed, and charmed by the moving scenes that he painted. It seemed to be an epitome of all the classical and philosophical studies that I had hitherto made, and it gave me a foretaste and a relish for the mystical and theological studies that were to follow. After the Inferno I took up the Purgatorio with unabated interest and, before the summer vacation was over, I had finished the Paradiso. It was a wonderful revelation to me of genius, a stirring allegory of human life and a lofty vision of the life eternal in the enjoyment of the sight of God.

I was particularly impressed by the position of the Blessed Virgin in the Divina Commedia. I was born on her Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception and my life had been placed early under her protection. It was only natural that I should be attracted by the exquisite and tender references that were made to the Mother of God and, for the first time, I felt the sweetness of pronouncing her beautiful name "Maria." Virgil, representing human philosophy, could lead Dante only so far as the light of human reason could penetrate. Beatrice, representing Divine Philosophy, could lead him thence to Paradise. St. Bernard, representing loving contemplation, could lead him still nearer to God, but it was only through Mary that Dante could obtain a foretaste of the Beatific Vision, the object of his sacred pilgrimage.

The selection of St. Bernard by Dante was not arbitrary. No other Saint of God had written more sublimely of the Mother of God. In the belief that "through Mary not only is the light of grace given to man on earth, but even the vision of God, is vouchsafed to souls in Heaven," Dante had recourse to St. Bernard to commend him to the Blessed Virgin at whose maternal intercession his eyes were illumined with the light of God.

> Chè la mia vista, venendo sincera,
> e più e più entrava per lo raggio
> de l' alta luce, che da sè è vera. Par. XXXIII, 52-54.

"For my sight becoming clear, entered more and more through the ray of that Sublime Light, which of itself is true."

It is the closing canto that is the apotheosis and crown of the whole Divina Commedia and therein is my favourite quotation, the prayer of St. Bernard to Mary, breathing forth the sweetest odour of devotion to the Mother of God.

WILLIAM CARDINAL O'CONNELL, Archbishop, Boston, Mass.

DANTE INVOKES THE LIGHT OF THE MOST HIGH TO ENABLE HIM TO DESCRIBE SOMEWHAT THE GLORIES OF THE BEATIFIC VISION.

O somma luce che tanto ti levi
da' concetti mortali, a la mia mente
ripresta un poco di quel che parevi,
e fa la lingua mia tanto possente,
ch' una favilla sol de la tua gloria
possa lasciare a la futura gente. 67-73.

A quella luce cotal si diventa,
che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
è impossibil che mai si consenta; 100-102.

"O Supreme Light who dost lift Thyself so high above mortal conceptions, do Thou lend again to my memory a small part of what Thou didst appear, and give my tongue such power that it may be able to leave one single spark of Thy glory for the future generations. 67-73.

In that Light one becomes such that it is impossible he should ever consent to turn himself from it for other sight. 100-102.

COMMENT.

My love for these sublime passages is that they lift the soul, even if but for one fleeting moment, to the celestial air, nor, after this supreme experience, can the soul ever turn backward and be the same as before. The entire spiritual nature is transformed, as if "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," not for itself alone, but to record for races yet to come.

LILIAN WHITING, Boston, Mass. Author of Italy the Magic Land.

DANTE TRIES TO DESCRIBE WHAT HE SAW IN THE DIVINE ESSENCE ITSELF.

Oh abbondante grazia ond' io presunsi
ficcar lo viso per la luce etterna,
tanto che la veduta vi consunsi!
Nel suo profondo vidi che s' interna,
legato con amore in un volume,
ciò che per l' universo si squaderna;
sustanze e accidenti e lor costume,
quasi conflati insieme, per tal modo
che ciò ch' i' dico è un semplice lume.
La forma universal di questo nodo
credo ch' i' vidi, perchè più di largo,
dicendo questo, mi sento ch' i' godo.
Un punto solo m' è maggior letargo
che venticinque secoli a la 'mpresa,
che fè Nettuno ammirar l' ombra d' Argo.
Così la mente mia, tutta sospesa,
mirava fissa, immobile e attenta,
e sempre di mirar faciesi accesa.
A quella luce cotal si diventa,
che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
è impossibil che mai si consenta;
però che il ben, ch' è del volere obietto,
tutto s' accoglie in lei; e fuor di quella
è defettivo ciò ch' è lì perfetto. 82-105.

O Grace abounding, by which I presumed to fix mine eyes upon the Eternal Light so intently, that there I exhausted my sight. In its depths I saw there is contained, bound with Love in one volume, whatsoever is dispersed throughout the universe; substance and accidents with their modes, fused together as it were in such a way that what I speak of is a simple light. I believe that I saw the universal form of this knot, because, in saying this, I feel that I more at large rejoice. A single moment of that vision causes in me greater oblivion, than twenty-five centuries of forgetfulness would produce concerning the enterprise which made Neptune marvel at the shadow of the Argo. Thus, my mind, wholly wrapt, stood with fixed gaze immovable and intent, and ever enkindled by its gazing. In that Light one becomes such that it is impossible he should ever consent to turn himself from it for other sight, because the Good which is the object of the will, is all concentrated in it, and outside of it that is defective which is perfect there.

COMMENT.

1—I choose this passage because it seems to me the most perfect example in European literature of one of the highest and most difficult kinds of poetry—that which seeks to give artistic embodiment to the intuition of metaphysical truth.

Mrs. Stuart Moore, London, England.

2—The passage: "In its depths I saw there is contained, bound with Love in one volume, whatsoever is dispersed throughout the universe" has always struck me as the boldest and grandest thing in Dante,—the passage which, upon the whole, is the most complete summary of his work.

Theodore Maynard, poet and critic, Leonia, N. J. Author of Drums of Defeat.

3—The lines beginning with *Oh abbondante grazia* and ending with *lume*, 82-90, seem to me the fullest and most beautiful expression of Dante's philosophy of nature and, at the same time, a revelation of the spiritual significance that lies behind the technical phraseology of Scholasticism.

Edmund G. Gardner, Litt.D., London, England. Author of Dante's Ten Heavens, Dante and the Mystics, etc.

DANTE'S VISION OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

Ne la profonda e chiara sussistenza
de l' alto lume parvermi tre giri
di tre colori e d' una contenenza;
e l' un da l' altro come iri da iri
perea reflesso, e 'l terzo parea foco
che quinci e quindi igualmente si spiri.
Oh quanto è corto il dire e come fioco
al mio concetto! e questo, a quel ch' i' vidi,
è tanto, che non basta a dicer 'poco'.
O luce etterna che sola in te sidi,
sola t' intendi, e da te intelletta
e intendente te ami e arridi! 115-126.

In the profound and clear subsistence of that exalted Light there appeared to me three circles of three colours and one dimension; and the one appeared to be reflected by the other, as rainbow by rainbow,

and the third appeared to be fire breathed forth equally from the one and from the other. Oh how insufficient is speech, and how feeble beside my conception; and this (my conception) to what I saw is such that "little" only poorly expresses it. O Eternal Light who dwellest in Thyself alone! Thou alone understandest Thyself and by Thyself art understood and understanding Thou lovest Thyself and smilest on Thyself!

COMMENT.

1—In these lines I see summed up the very essence of religion and the glorification of the Infinite. Dante has described the indescribable, he has painted man's relation to God.

HERBERT H. VAUGHAN, Ph.D., Professor of Italian, University of California, Berkeley, Calif.

2—I greatly admire this passage for its depth of thought, vigor of expression and wealth of poetry. Face to face with the ineffable Splendour, with the Blessed Trinity itself, Dante here speaks of the unfathomable and dazzling mystery, in language as exact as it is sublime.

FELIX KLEIN, Meudon, France. Honorary Professor, Catholic Institute of Paris, Author of In the Land of the Strenuous Life.

3—In several places of the Divine Comedy, Dante, with profound theological learning, expounds the dogma of the Blessed Trinity.

The verses, 124-126, quoted above, are an example. They form, indeed, one of the most admirable examples because of their fulness of concept, preciseness of diction and efficacy of style. I prefer this passage as an ejaculatory prayer, an elevation of the soul to God, One and Trine, Eternal Light.

The Poet has expressed in the words "sola in te sidi," the person of the Father who has no beginning. Then in the "sola t' intendi, e da te intelletta," the generation of the Word, and in "intendente te ami e arridi," the procession of the Holy Ghost. Thus, all the words are truly appropriate both in themselves and in the harmony of their verses. In that final word of sweetness: "Ami e arridi," signifying the reciprocal love and joy of the Father and the Son, we almost experience the melodious echo of the eternal, infinite, intimate life of God.

The passage, in its brevity, is, therefore, a clear and exact definition of the Blessed Trinity and it is, also, a loving hymn of praise to the glory of this highest Mystery. The repetition of the verses enlightens the mind and warms the heart.

GUILIA DI RAFFAELO FORNACIARI, Florence, Italy. Author of Arte e Vita Mistica Nella Firenze di Dante.

IN THE FLASH OF LIGHTNING THE MYSTERY OF THE HYPOSTATIC UNION OF THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST IS REVEALED TO DANTE. HIS EVERY DESIRE AND HIS WHOLE WILL ARE THENCEFORTH EXCLUSIVELY IMPELLED BY DIVINE LOVE.

Ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne:
se non che la mia mente fu percossa
da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne.
A l' alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disio e il velle,
sì come rota ch' igualmente è mossa,
l' amor che move il sole e l' altre stelle. 139-145.

But my own wings were not for this, had it not been that my mind was smitten by a flash within which its wish was realized. Here power failed my exalted imagination; but now, just like a wheel that is equally moved, my desire and will were revolving, turned by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.

COMMENT.

1—The spiritually ecstatic seems, to me, in Dante, even more compelling, stronger, therefore, than the strong, and more deathless, as verse and music wing away from *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* to *La Vita Nuova* and *Paradiso*.

CHARLOTTE EUDYMON PORTER, Boston, Mass. Author of Hero Song of Jeanne d' Arc, Shakespeare Studies.

2—The passage in portrayal is peculiarly picturesque and graphic, in expression it is artistic and poetic. Uniquely it sings of the ineffable and the incomprehensible. Infinitely worthy of the Poet-Seer is this sublime vision of the abiding union of all-embracing Love.

FRANZ JOSEPH ZLATNIK, Vienna, Austria. Author of the Operas, Der Paria and Aucasin Nicolette.

L'amor che move il sole e l' altre stelle. 145.

The Love that moves the Sun and the other Stars.

COMMENT.

1—This seems to me a magnificent summary of the Christian philosophy of life.

AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR, Englewood, N. J. Author of A Child's Garden in India, etc.

2—Here is music wafted into silence, anxiety calmed into perfect joy. Here is the plenitude of seraphic intuition. The beginning, Creation, is made one with its term, Redemption.

GUIDO MANACORDA, Florence, Italy. Author of Sinfonie e Pastelli. Editor of Testi Cristiani.

3—For profundity of thought, loftiness of inspiration, music in perfect harmony with sense, this verse is the crown of the whole canto's supreme exposition of faith's most incomprehensible mystery.

J. KOCHANOWSKI, Ph.D., President of Warsaw University, Poland.

4—These words have brought me the most cheer. In this utterance is sublimely stated, I believe, a universal principle, a cosmic law, pointing to

"one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

RICHARD EDWIN DAY, Litt.D. Albany, N. Y. Author of Dante, a Sonnet Sequence, and Other Poems.

5—I find endless beauty in each page, each strophe, each line of Dante's Divine Comedy. Depth, delicacy, force, harmony,—all are in this supreme Poem. However, in my judgment, the single phrase quoted above summarizes all these in complete and full perfection.

Never has any poet in any language expressed thought more beautiful in words more resplendent.

MARIO LUI MORALES, Barcelona, Spain.

6—This line, beautiful as the culmination and completion of the poem, embodies an attitude toward natural law which seems to me profoundly philosophical, as well as highly poetical. Physical force is here identified with moral power, instead of the reverse. Thus the force of attraction that holds the stars in their courses, becomes Love, just as in Wordsworth's Ode the law of gravitation becomes a vast subdivision of Duty.

Lewis F. Mott, Ph.D., Professor of English, College of the City of New York. Author of The System of Courtly Love.

7—I am sure that this particular line recurs to me more frequently than any other in the poem. Really, I wonder whether it would not be Dante's own choice as his favourite line, since under the flash of lightning which moved him, this poetic acclaim of his soul becomes the capstone of his marvelous creation. I think it may fairly be concluded that, in his Encyclical on the sexcentenary of the Poet's death, Pope Benedict XV was not too extravagant in characterizing the author of La Divina Commedia as "the greatest extoller of Christian Wisdom and the most eloquent of all singers."

Seymour van Santvoord, Troy, N. Y. Author of Saint Francis; Octavia.

8—My reasons for preferring this passage are—

(1) Because of the profound truth and correct philosophy it contains. It proclaims Love as exemplified in unselfish Labor and disinterested Ambition. Love is the Soul of the Universe, the Motion of the World.

(2) Because of the superior art that enshrines such truths in easy metaphors with certain emotional effect.

(3) Because of the unexcelled genius shown in having the poem end in an invocation to the Eternal, Blessed, Infinite Being.

Lucio Gil Fagoaga, Secretary of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Madrid, Spain.

9—The Comedy of Dante is so rich with light, and interesting with details poetically stirring, that all the arts, archi-

tecture, music and painting, can draw therefrom power suitable to render them sublime.

But, more than to the exterior expression of an art or an emotion, it is necessary to liken the preferred Dantean image, to that which in the Comedy calls forth directly divine power, to establish a cosmic order. I mean nothing more or less than the harmony of the universe.

For this reason, from childhood, first by virtue of my romantic infatuation of the superman and then of the God Incarnate, and later with a growing religious knowledge of necessary human limitations, I have preferred the sublime verses quoted above, in which Dante, in an ecstasy of love, summarizes and clarifies the reality of the most profound mysteries.

RAFFAELO FRANCHI, Florence, Italy, Author of L'Amico dei Poete.

10—I can never recite the last nine lines of the Paradiso without a thrill and a sense of the greatest satisfaction and wonder. This climax of the last cantica and of the whole Comedy is like the close of a heavenly opera in which is heard the harmony of all the spheres, harmony of thought, harmony of sound, harmony of light and colour; in brief, the harmony of God, who thus reveals Himself in the words of Dante, which, after all, are, in a sense, the words of God, for Dante's words are these:

"Poema sacro
al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra."

ANGELO LIPARI, Associate Professor of Italian in Yale University New Haven, Conn.

11—I speak only of the mounting glory of the Paradiso, a steady crescendo of radiance and rapture, till it culminates in the ineffable light and beauty of the Great White Rose, whose dazzling center is God Himself. Then, in inspired words, Dante sums up the whole spirit of the Blessed. Suffused in ecstatic peace and passion, which here are one, they cry joyously "In His Will is our peace," that peace which passeth understanding. As we close this poem of more than mortal

genius, well may we echo St. Bernard's magnificent, infinitely moving prayer, that we may so live our lives here that ultimately we too may come to be forever with the Blessed, in the Divine Radiance of God's Presence.

Constance Grosvenor Alexander, Ph.D., Head of the Post-Graduate Department of the Dana Hall School, Wellesley, Mass. Author of a biography of "Francesca."

ADDENDA.

MAN'S INNATE IDEA OF GOOD.

Ciascun confusamente un bene apprende
nel qual si queti l'animo. Purg. XVII, 127.

Everyone in a confused sort of a way has a conception of a good in which his mind can find rest.

COMMENT.

These verses express a very important truth which in our day finds a great pedagogical application. The child, as well as the adult, chooses in the external world that which best suits his needs, inclinations, tastes, aptitude and vocation. By reason of this law, sculptured so admirably by Dante in the lines quoted above, the child must be given freedom of choice, movement and activity so that his personality may be developed.

On that law is based the "New Education," the fourth World-Congress of which was held at Locarno, August 1927. With the passive and rigid discipline imposed by the old school, children were dispensed from thinking and from keeping a guard over themselves; with the regulated liberty conceded by the new school, the pupils learn to know the effects of their own actions and gradually they strengthen their sense of responsibility.

LUIGI CREDARO, Editor of the *Rivista Pedagogica*. Senator of the Kingdom, Former Minister of Public Instruction.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE HUMAN WILL.

Chè volontà, se non vuol, non s' ammorza. Par. IV, 76.

For if the Will willeth not, it cannot be crushed.

COMMENT.

This is the strongest verse in the Divine Comedy. It teaches that in man there is an almost infinite power, which he must ever employ. So it will be vain to appeal to circumstances, if one has failed or betrayed his very nature.

Perhaps other verses are more harmonious, and purely poetic (e.g. that delightfully magnificent line in Par. XXIII, 25, "Quale ne'plenilunii sereni"), but the one quoted above is to me the richest in significance. It is the most strenuous. It is the most Roman. It is truly a Fascisti verse.

GEORGE DEL VECCHIO, Rector of the Royal University of Rome.

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